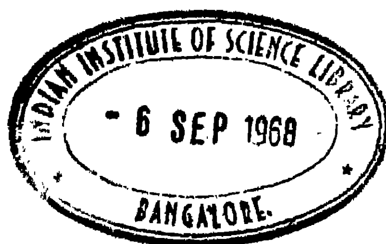
THE COLLECTED WORKS OF
MAHATMA GANDHI

XXVI

(January - April 1925)





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degree, the khadi programme had, according to Gandhiji, a political significance which he tried to explain to an English friend thus: "Swaraj can be peacefully attained only if the whole Indian mass work as with one will, be it on ever so little a constructive and useful thing for ever so little a time. Such an effort presupposes national consciousness. This is possible only through the spinning-wheel" (p. 49). In his public speeches, however, he dwelt rather on the economic and humanitarian implications of khadi.

The Hindu-Muslim problem had become so complicated that Gandhiji thought it wise to do nothing about it for the time being. Explaining his predicament in a public meeting in Madras on March 7, he said: "For the time being I have put away in my cupboard this Hindu-Muslim tangle. That does not mean that I have despaired of a solution. My mind will eternally work at it till I find out a solution. But I must confess to you today that I cannot present a workable solution that you will accept. In the atmosphere surcharged as it is with mutual distrust I cannot persuade either the Hindus or the Mussalmans to accept my solution" (p. 244). He confessed his helplessness again in "My Position" (16-4-1925): "I cannot tease Hindu-Muslim unity into life. It, therefore, requires no outward activity from me. As a Hindu I shall serve as many Mussalmans as will let me serve them. I shall advise those who seek my advice. For the rest, I cease to worry about what I cannot mend. But I have a living faith in unity coming. It must come even if it has to do so after a few pitched battles" (p. 514).

In this atmosphere of mutual distrust, Gandhiji found himself, on two issues, in a position which could be easily misunderstood. Maulana Shaukat Ali and he had jointly undertaken to investigate into the causes of the Kohat riot in the preceding September and effect a reconciliation between the two communities. The local Muslim leaders refused to assist them in the inquiry and, on the basis of the evidence available, Gandhiji and the Maulana came to divergent conclusions. Public admission of their difference ran the serious risk of being misrepresented and exploited by communal elements. Since the beginning of the Khilafat movement in 1920-21, Gandhiji and Maulana Shaukat Ali had worked in close association and the former had won the goodwill of the Muslim masses. A difference between the two leaders on a communal issue might or might not affect their personal relations, but it was certain to have unhappy repercussions on the

general atmosphere in the country. Gandhiji was extremely careful to present the matter in the proper light both to the Maulana and to the general public. He was aware of the possible consequences of public admission of their difference. "I tremble to publish our statements. The publication will give rise to an acrimonious discussion" (p. 191). But his faith in the power of truth was absolute and he felt that the risk must be taken. "But if after we have exhausted all our resources to come to a joint conclusion, we fail, we must dare to let the public know our difference of opinion and know too that we shall still love one another and work together" (p. 191). Hakim Ajmal Khan suggested and Pandit Motilal Nehru agreed that the statements should not be published. But Gandhiji released the statements to the Press on March 19 with the explanation: "But we, or at least I, came to the conclusion that the public which had hitherto known the Ali Brothers and me to be always in agreement about so many public things should know that we too might differ on some matters, but without suspecting each other of conscious bias or wilful perversion of facts and without mutual affection being in any way affected. Our open acknowledgment of our differences will be an object-lesson in mutual toleration" (pp. 336-7).

The second issue on which Gandhiji's position led to a controversy was an equally sensitive one. Commenting in *Young India* on a report that two members of the Ahmadiya sect had been stoned to death in Afghanistan as penalty for apostasy, Gandhiji had said: "I understand that the stoning method is enjoined in the Koran only in certain circumstances which do not cover the cases under observation. But as a human being living in the fear of God I should question the morality of the method under any circumstance whatsoever. . . . Every formula of every religion has in this age of reason, to submit to the acid test of reason and universal justice if it is to ask for universal assent. Error can claim no exemption even if it can be supported by the scriptures of the world" (p. 202). This was too radical an attitude for the orthodox and led to some angry protests. The President of the Punjab Khilafat Committee wrote, "You have shaken the belief of millions of your Muslim admirers in your capacity to lead them" (p. 226). Gandhiji explained that he had criticized not the Koran but only its interpreters. But he was by no means on the defensive. With uncompromising directness he declared that "even the teachings themselves of the Koran cannot be exempt from criticism" (p. 226). He clari-

fied his position further: "In my writing about Islam I take the same care of its prestige that I do of Hinduism. I apply the same method of interpretation to it that I apply to Hinduism. I no more defend on the mere ground of authority a single text in the Hindu scriptures than I can defend one from the Koran. Everything has to submit to the test of reason. Islam appeals to people because it appeals also to reason" (p. 415).

Gandhiji's critical attitude to tradition and authority in religion is forcefully illustrated by his ceaseless campaign against the evil of untouchability. Alike in Gujarat and South India, he appealed to people's reason. "I reject the Shastras," he told a public meeting in Madras, "if I am told that the Shastras countenance any such evil. But I am positive, as I am positive that we are sitting here together, that our Shastras enjoin or countenance no such devilry. To say that a single human being, because of his birth, becomes an untouchable, unapproachable or invisible, is to deny God" (p. 373). He had seen the evil in its worst form in the Travancore State. "Mere sight of a certain man is considered by blind orthodoxy as a sin. *Nayadis* are expected to remain invisible. I saw two men belonging to that caste in Trichur. Except for the human form I saw nothing of humanness about them. (Laughter.) My friends, it is not a matter for laughter but it is a matter for shedding tears of blood" (p. 373). Gandhiji's chief purpose in this tour was to cultivate public opinion in support of the satyagraha at Vykom for securing the use of a public road to members of these unfortunate communities. To that end, he met the authorities of the State and also representatives of the orthodox section. He put three alternative proposals before the latter, all of which were rejected. He advised the satyagrahis, nevertheless, to be charitable towards the opponents of reform and credit them with honesty of purpose. "I have found that mere appeal to reason does not answer where prejudices are age-long and based on supposed religious authority. Reason has to be strengthened by suffering and suffering opens the eyes of understanding. Therefore there must be no trace of compulsion in our acts" (p. 271). This is the essence of the method of satyagraha.

Gandhiji was often questioned, during his campaign against untouchability, about his views on the caste system and the restrictions on inter-dining and intermarriage which were an essential part of it. "I draw," he said, "a sharp distinction between untouchability and *varna* or caste. The former has no

scientific basis. . . . The caste system has in my opinion a scientific basis" (p. 289). He explained in another context that the system was "a healthy division of work based on birth" (p. 540), but hastened to add that the present ideas of caste were a perversion of the original. Nor did he regard the abolition of restrictions on intermarriage and inter-dining as essential reforms. "These self-imposed restrictions have a sanitary as also a spiritual value. But non-observance no more dooms a man to perdition than its observance raises him to the seventh heaven" (p. 569). It was the principle of self-control implied in these restrictions that Gandhiji valued most in traditional Brahmin culture. "I would not have the non-Brahmins to rise on the ruin of Brahmins. I would rather that they rose to the height that the Brahmins have occupied before now" (p. 331).

In the three articles (Items 62, 269 and 322) addressed to a Revolutionary, Gandhiji expounded clearly and patiently the philosophy of life which he was both preaching and trying to practise: "Armed conspiracies against something satanic is like matching satans against Satan. But since one Satan is one too many for me, I would not multiply him. Whether my activity is effortlessness or all efforts, remains perhaps to be seen. Meanwhile, if it has resulted in making two yards of yarn spun where only one was spinning, it is so much to the good. Cowardice, whether philosophical or otherwise, I abhor" (p. 489). And he drew a sharp distinction between the dharma of mortals and the mysteries of godhead: "It is idle to drag in the name of Krishna. Either we believe him to be the very God or we do not. If we do, we impute to him omniscience and omnipotence. Such a one can surely destroy. But we are puny mortals ever erring and ever revising our views and opinions. We may not without coming to grief ape Krishna, the inspirer of the *Gita*" (pp. 567-8).

Gandhiji's full participation in traditional Hindu sentiment and his attempt to give it practical, constructive expression are seen in his approach to cow-protection. He urged his fellow-Hindus to organize model dairies which would also support infirm and disabled cows, instead of fighting with other communities to prevent their slaughter. He joined other workers in establishing the All-India Cow-Protection Sabha and drafted a constitution for it (pp. 35-7). He tried to explain his sentiment for the cow in rational terms in a letter to Jawaharlal Nehru: "The cow is merely a type for all that lives. Cow-protection means protection

of the weak, the helpless, the dumb and the deaf. Man becomes then not the lord and master of all creation but he is its servant. The cow to me is a sermon on pity" (p. 545).

This blending of reason and sentiment was the essence of Gandhiji's religious outlook. To a friend who objected to the mention of God in Congress pledges, he replied: "To me God is truth and love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. . . . God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist" (p. 224). But, to Gandhiji himself, God was not a principle or abstraction; it was a deeply felt personal presence. "We are *not*, He alone *IS*. And if we will be, we must eternally sing His praise and do His will. Let us dance to the tune of His *bansi*—lute, and all would be well" (p. 225). The strength of his religious feeling is brought out in the account of his state of mind while assuming chairmanship of the Cow-Protection Sabha: "My pen shakes as I write this. There are tears in my eyes. . . . My predicament is very much that of a child who weeps profusely because he does not have the stomach to eat all that he wishes to. I am greedy. I am impatient to see and to demonstrate the victory of dharma. . . . The ship of my longings is thus rolling back and forth on a stormy sea" (p. 319). And it was the memory of his visit on the previous day to Kanyakumari which had induced this wave of emotion. In "The *Darshan* of Kanyakumari" he says: "The music of the ocean-waves, sweet and gentle like strains from a *vina*, could only invite one to meditation. . . . I . . . sat in silence, my heart filled with the image of the teacher of the *Gita*" (pp. 424-5).

NOTE TO THE READER

In reproducing English material, every endeavour has been made to adhere strictly to the original. Obvious typographical errors have been corrected and words abbreviated in the text generally spelt out. Variant spellings of names have, however, been retained as in the original.

Matter in square brackets has been supplied by the Editors. Quoted passages, where these are in English, have been set up in small type and printed with an indent. Indirect reports of speeches and interviews, as also passages which are not by Gandhiji, have been set up in small type. In reports of speeches and interviews slight changes and omissions, where necessary, have been made in passages not attributed to Gandhiji.

While translating from Gujarati and Hindi, efforts have been made to achieve fidelity and also readability in English. Where English translations are available, they have been used with such changes as were necessary to bring them into conformity with the original.

The date of an item has been indicated at the top right-hand corner; if the original is undated, the inferred date is supplied within square brackets, the reasons being given where necessary. The date given at the end of an item alongside the source is that of publication. The writings are placed under the date of publication, except where they carry a date-line or where the date of writing has special significance and is ascertainable.

References to Volume I of this series are to the August 1958 edition. References to *An Autobiography* cite only the Part and Chapter, in view of the varying pagination in different editions.

In the source-line, the symbol S.N. stands for documents available in the Sabarmati Sangrahalaya, Ahmedabad; G.N. refers to those available in the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi and Sangrahalaya, New Delhi; C.W. denotes documents secured by the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi.

The appendices provide background material relevant to the text. A list of sources and a chronology for the period covered by the volume are also provided at the end.

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CONTENTS

1. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

SOJITRA,
January 16, 1925

MY DEAREST CHARLIE[1],

I do not know what cable you want me to send to Mr. Alexander[2], because the authority sent once is of a general character. If, however, you want me to send another, please send me draft and address.

Am too tired to write more just now.

With love,

Yours,
MOHAN

[PS.]

Do not think of the M. League[3]. The Congress represents all in this matter.

C. F. ANDREWS ESQ.
SHANTINIKETAN
Via BOLPUR
E. I. RY.

From a photostat: G.N. 2619

[1] Charles Freer Andrews (1871-1940); British missionary; co-worker of Tagore and Gandhiji; honoured as "Deenabandhu" (brother of the poor)

[2] Horace Alexander, represented the Society of Friends of Great Britain at the International Opium Conference at Geneva; *vide* Vol. XXV, p. 220.

[3] Muslim League

2. *SPEECH AT WOMEN'S CONFERENCE, SOJITRA*[1]

January 16, 1925

To women I talk about *Ramarajya*[2]. *Ramarajya* is more than swarajya. Let me therefore talk about what *Ramarajya* will be like—not about swaraj. *Ramarajya* can come about only when there is likelihood of a Sita arising. Among the many *shlokas*[3] recited by Hindus, one is on women. It enumerates women who are worthy of being remembered prayerfully early in the morning. Who are these women by taking whose names men and women become sanctified? Among such virtuous women Sita's name is bound to figure. We never say Rama-Sita but Sita-Rama, not Krishna-Radha, but Radha-Krishna. It is thus that we tutor even the parrot. The reason why we think of Sita's name first is that, without virtuous women, there can be no virtuous men. A child will take after the mother, not the father. It is the mother who holds its reins. The father's concerns lie outside the home and that is why I keep saying that, as long as the women of India do not take part in public life, there can be no salvation for the country. Only those can take part in public life who are pure in body and mind. As long as women whose body and mind tend in one direction—i.e., towards the path of virtue—do not come into public life and purify it, we are not likely to attain *Ramarajya* or swaraj. Even if we did, I would have no use for that kind of swaraj to which such women have not made their full contribution. One could well stretch oneself on the ground in obeisance to a woman of purity of mind and heart. I should like such women to take part in public life.

Who shall we say is a woman of this kind? It is said that a virtuous woman can be recognized by the grace of her face. Must we then accept all the prostitutes in India as virtuous? For it is their trade to deck themselves up. Not at all. The thing needed for grace is not beauty of face but purity of heart. A woman who is pure of heart and mind is ever fit to be worshipped. It is a law of nature that our outward appearance reflects what we really are within. If inwardly we are sullied, so shall we appear without.

[1] In Petlad district, Gujarat
[2] The ideal rule of Rama
[3] Verses

The eyes and the voice are external signs. The discerning can recognize virtue by voice.

Then what does it mean to be virtuous[1]? What is the sign of virtue? I accept khadi as the symbol of virtue. I do not suggest that anyone who wears khadi has become sanctified for that reason alone.

I ask you to participate in public life. What does it mean to participate in public life? Public work does not mean attendance at meetings, but wearing khadi—the symbol of purity—and serving the men and women of India. After all, what service can we render to the Rajas and Maharajas? If we try to approach the Maharajas, the sentry at the gate may not even let us in. Likewise, we do not have to wait on millionaires: To serve India therefore is to serve its poor. God we cannot see with our eyes; it would do if we serve those whom we can see. The object of our public life is to serve the visible God, that is, the poor. If you want to serve them, take the name of God, go amidst them and ply the spinning-wheel.

To take part in public life is to serve your poor sisters. Their lot is wretched. I met them on the banks of the Ganga where Janaka[2] lived, where Sitaji lived. They were in a pitiful state. They had scanty clothes, but I could not give them saris because I had not found the charkha then. Indian women remain naked even if they have clothes, because as long as one Indian woman has to go naked it must be said that all are naked. Or even if a woman is adorned in a variety of ways but is of unworthy soul, she would still be naked. We have to think of ways of making them spin, weave and thus covering themselves truly.

At present when people go to the villages to render service, the villagers imagine that they have come to exact *chauth*[3]. Why do they imagine this? You must realize that you go to the villages to give and not to take.

Were our mothers mad that they used to spin? Now when I ask you to spin, I must appear mad to you. But it is not Gandhi who is mad; it is yourself who are so. You do not have any compassion for the poor. Even so you try to convince yourself that India has become prosperous and sing of that prosperity. If you want to enter public life, render public service, then spin on the charkha, wear khadi. If your body and mind are pure

[1] The Gujarati word is *pativrata*, which literally means "devoted to her husband".

[2] The philosopher king of Videha; father of Sita

[3] One-fourth of the farm-produce formerly collected as land revenue

you will become truly swadeshi. Spin in the name of God. To spin for your poor sisters is to worship God. Giving in charity to the poor means an offering to God. That alone is charity by which the poor become happy. If you give in charity to whomsoever you please, it would be said that you indulge your whims. If you give in charity to those who have a pair of hands, a pair of legs and good health, it would be said that you were out to impoverish them. Do not give alms to a Brahmin because he is a Brahmin. Make him spin and give him a handful of jowar or rice. The finest sign of purity of mind is to go and work for khadi amidst such people.

The second sign of virtue is service to *Antyajas*[1]. Brahmins and gurus of today regard touching an *Antyaja* as sinful. I say that it is a meritorious act, not a sin. I do not ask you to eat and drink with them, but to mix with them in order to render service. It is meritorious to serve sick *Antyaja* boys who are worthy of service. *Antyajas* eat, drink, stand and sit, and so do we all. It is not that doing this is either sinful or meritorious. My mother used to become *Antyaja* for some time and then she would not allow anyone to touch her. My wife similarly used to become an *Antyaja*. At this time she became an untouchable. Our *Bhangis* also become untouchable when they do their work. As long as they do not bathe, one can understand not touching them. But if you would not touch them even when they have bathed and tidied up, for whose sake do they bathe then? They have no God even. They think others have the same kind of nose and eyes and yet the latter despise them. What then should they do? Think of this: Did Ramachandraji despise the *Antyajas*? He ate berries already savoured by Shabari and he hugged the king of Nishadas, and they were both untouchables. You can see for yourselves that there is no untouchability in the Hindu religion.

The third sign of virtue is furtherance of friendship with the Muslims. If someone tells you that "they are Mias" or "Mia and Mahadev cannot get on", then tell him that you cannot harbour enmity towards the Muslims.

If you do these three things, you will be said to have taken full part in public life. By doing so you will become worthy of being prayerfully remembered early in the morning; and it

[1] Hindus traditionally regarded as untouchables, whom Gandhiji later described as Harijans, God's folk

would be said that you have worked for India's salvation. I beseech you to become thus worthy.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 87-90

3. *SPEECH AT KSHATRIYA CONFERENCE, SOJITRA*

January 16, 1925

BROTHERS,

I feel sorry that we have only ten minutes within which to finish the work of this Conference. For I have asked the *Antyaja* brothers to come in at four. You have passed three resolutions. All the three are very useful. You have resolved not to take alcohol; that is good. Temperance is not the concern of your community alone. Members of other communities also drink. You have passed resolutions saying that you will not sell your daughters and abduct women. Those are also good. You are Kshatriyas and you believe that you possess Kshatriya virtues. If we look at our Shastras we find that a true Kshatriya would not retreat after taking a step forward. Moreover, he protects others. You realize without my having to tell you that it is the quality of a Kshatriya to act in that manner and accepting that principle you should not shirk your responsibility. A vow is a pledge, an undertaking to do something, with God as witness. You have vowed not to drink, not to sell girls or to abduct them. But if you do not keep your pledge, it will be said that you have sinned against the whole world. Each of the four *varnas*[1] must adhere to the vows it takes.

To break a pledge is to retreat. So if you once raise your hand to take an oath and then forget about it, you cease to be a Kshatriya. You would feel ashamed and so would I. That would weigh on me. Having promised Ravishankar[2] who is working among you that you would not steal, suppose you did so, what could he do? Government would punish you for it. On the other hand, Ravishankar would suffer by fasting; by doing so he would tell you that you had better kill him than break faith. It is with this Ravishankar as a witness that you have taken an oath; so if you break your pledge you will force him to fast. I am of Ravishankar's fraternity and know how to follow him. I

[1] Literally, a colour; the four castes among the Hindus

[2] A silent constructive worker of Gujarat

know not how to kill, but how to die. And remember that Ravishankar is not just one person, but a full harvest. Having cautioned you thus, I ask you: Will you keep your promises? This is not a theatre and I can't act myself. No community progresses through imitation. It is we, the educated, who by our play-acting have corrupted you. So think well before you raise your hand. The time has passed when a pledge could be fulfilled by merely raising a hand. So much about your vows.

And now two other things. One, you must wear khadi. You must not imagine that your country consists of only what lies between the Narmada and Sabarmati. Yours is a large country. It is 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad. If you want to walk all that distance, it will take 190 days. The people living in this country are your brothers and sisters. It is necessary for you to spin yarn for them and that yarn has to be given to the Congress. There is no other way to make khadi cheaper. Spin for half an hour each day. If crores of people do the same, khadi will cost nothing.

The other is to make the *Antyaja* community your own. A Kshatriya is the protector of the cow and the Brahmins. The cow is not the animal with two horns, but any being in distress. *Antyajas* are an unhappy community. If a Kshatriya forsakes the *Antyaja* community, he ceases to be a Kshatriya. If people who deem themselves to be Kshatriyas forsake the *Antyajas*, no one will count them as Kshatriyas.

I pray to God that He may sustain you in the fulfilment of your pledges. If you mean to keep your pledges, then believe my humble words. Those who wish to keep the vow should take the name of Rama on getting up in the morning and before going to bed and pray, "Oh Rama! Bless me and help me keep my vow." If you do that, you will not be tempted by liquor, you will feel no lust when you look at a woman. Our poor daughter is a cow. You would hate yourself if you sold her.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 91-3

4. SPEECH AT ANTYAJA CONFERENCE, SOJITRA

January 16, 1925

We must not conceal nor feel shame at the dirt within us. Women smoking hookahs are insufferable. Their mouths stink. The craving for liquor is also similar. I well know from experience the lot of drink-addicts. I also know about people who take bhang. Liquor and bhang are first cousins. I wish you would give up all these bad habits. If you would listen to me, give up meat altogether.

Those who won't touch the untouchables raise many objections. When I remonstrate with them, they say that the *Antyajas* are dirty, they drink toddy and eat meat. I tell them that such people are found even among Brahmins, *Vanias*[1] and other castes, yet their children go to schools and go to the temple; what perverse reasoning is this? Although I argue with them, I tell you at the same time to rid yourselves of the blot so that they will have nothing to blame you for. You should bathe regularly after your day's work is over. I have done much scavenging, and so have my sons; your Raojibhai, too, has done such work. There is no disgrace in it. This work is sacred and the man who removes filth is doing sacred work. You should also have a bath after cleaning hides. Good men always clean their teeth, wash and bathe and keep their bodies tidy. Do all this and tell the beads taking the name of Rama. If you don't have a rosary, tell the name of Rama on your finger tips. Through the name of Rama all your bad habits are bound to disappear. You will become purified and everyone will respect you. If you repeat the name of Rama on getting up in the morning and before going to bed in the evening, the day will go well for you and the night pass without bad dreams. To remain clean, don't eat what others have left over, do not take stale food. Even if you get sweets others have partaken of, go without them and eat *roti*[2] you yourselves have made. After all you are not born to eat left-overs. You have eyes, nose, a pair of ears. You are a complete man. Learn to preserve your human dignity.

Lots of people will come and tell you that your Hindu religion is all wrong, as you are not allowed to go to school or enter the temple. To such people you should say, "We

[1] Business Community

[2] Unleavened bread

shall settle accounts with our Hindu brothers; you may not come between us any more than you may intervene in a quarrel between father and son or among relatives"; and you should remain steadfast to your religion. I am myself an outcaste. There are many like myself. Shall I give up my religion because of that? Many Christian friends urge me to turn Christian. I tell them there is nothing wrong with my religion. Why should I give it up? Let me be an outcaste. If I am pure and clean, why should I be unhappy? I have joined the *Antyajas* and if for that reason Hindus persecute me, do I cease to be a Hindu? Hinduism is intended for me and for my soul. Tell this to both the Christians and the Muslims and be firm in your own religion. *Antyajas* are not pawns in a game of chess so that anyone can play with them. It is in my self-interest that I come to you calling you my brothers and sisters. My self-interest is my desire to rid myself of the sins my forefathers have committed against you; you are not to be blamed for that. So why should you give up your religion? It is I who have to make atonement. Why should you give up chanting the name of Rama? It is the way of Rama to make his followers and servants suffer and it is thus that he tests their devotion. It is my prayer that you will pass that test.

In conclusion, let me ask you to be compassionate, for we, all of us in this world, thrive on love. Let me ask you in the end to ply the spinning-wheel, weave yarn and wear khadi only.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 93-5

5. *SPEECH AT BARDOLI*

January 17, 1925

These gifts of coconut, yarn and money do not make me rejoice. I do accept these; but my search is for true men. I visited a very fine school in Varad. There are many fine teachers there, but many children were withdrawn from the national school after the Vidyapith resolution allowing *Antyaja* children to join it. I may make it known that a resolution has also been passed for the merger of the village school with the national school. However, what is the sense in forgetting our responsibilities one moment and remembering them the next? Were we merely staging a play in 1921?[1] We then thought that swaraj without the abolition of

[1] A reference to the Non-co-operation movement

untouchability was worthless. Swaraj without khadi would also be futile. Today, however, I find that Bardoli lacks faith, lacks the courage to be independent. The latter implies the courage to carry on with the unfinished job with a handful of men when all others have been beaten back. Bardoli has completed neither the khadi programme nor the abolition of untouchability and has left the *Dublas*[1] in a sorry plight. I would, at any rate, ask Bardoli to correct the errors it has made. I shall not lose faith in Bardoli. I find the same affection and sparkle in the eyes of women as I found there before. I have been informed that they have brought yarn and money along with them voluntarily and that they have not been prompted by anyone to do so. It is the men, however, who have lost the spirit. Shri Raichura[2] instead of singing that Gujarat has saved the honour of the Punjab, Bengal, etc., should say that Gujarat has not saved its own honour. Gujarat still has the opportunity to do so. I do not ask you to go to jail today; today I ask you to practise what is our ordinary dharma which is very easy to practise. I was not very eager to come here but came along as a matter of my dharma. Though I have not lost hope, I am certainly disheartened, as we have lost self-confidence today. The time is not yet gone. Think no more of boycotts which were a temporary affair. I have given up all those things which were only a means for securing swaraj. You must, however, pursue that which helps the attainment of self-purification—khadi, the abolition of untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity. Practise these as your ordinary dharma regardless of whether swaraj is secured or not, otherwise we shall surely perish. Hinduism will be destroyed if untouchability is not ended and, without khadi, there will be such starvation in the country that our flesh will be eaten up by crows and dogs, leaving only bones behind.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 8-2-1925

[1] A backward community of Gujarat
[2] A poet and writer from Saurashtra

6. *REMINISCENCES OF KATHIAWAR*

In an Ocean of Love

Whenever I go to Kathiawar, I am overwhelmed by the affection I receive. This has ceased to surprise me. Wherever I go, I see Kathiawar. Yet, being in Kathiawar makes a difference. Can it be that I myself need love from Kathiawar? Or, that I wish Kathiawar to make an exhibition of its love? I cannot fathom the nature of my feeling. Why should there be any exhibition of love in Kathiawar? What kind of love is that which requires formal courtesies to express it?

Greater Expectations

Or else, could it be that I expect more of Kathiawar? I am not satisfied perhaps by its external manifestation of love. Perhaps I am inwardly dissatisfied at this external show alone. If a mother, trying to be polite towards her son forgets to serve him his *roti* and is busy in decorating the dining room in his honour, he will feel that she is keeping him at arm's length. Do I have a similar feeling? Am I not, by my behaviour, suggesting that I shall be entirely satisfied if I am favoured with that one thing for which I have shamelessly come? Yes, I am.

Whether that is true or not, I came and stayed in Bhavnagar,[1] regarding it as the land of my forefathers, and built castles in the air. Not one of my hopes was shattered. The reception committee had drafted so many resolutions, all of which I could be said to have cast aside. My suggestion that those resolutions should be withdrawn did not meet with the approval of all. The committee, however, accepted my advice.

The Spinning-Wheel

I did not go to Bhavnagar in the hope that the spinning-wheel would be made a condition for franchise. Hence I was certainly pleased to find the resolution about the spinning-wheel. Parts of it were overdone. It said that all members were to sell annually khadi worth Rs. 50 and, members of the executive committee, khadi worth Rs. 500. I suggested that this condition should be dropped. If members accepted responsibility to that extent,

[1] For the Kathiawar Political Conference held on January 8 and 9, 1925. Gandhiji presided; *vide* Vol. XXV.

we could boycott foreign cloth without delay. However, by incorporating something in the franchise, which would depend upon co-operation from others, the intrinsic merit of the franchise would be destroyed.

Although this has been dropped from the franchise, those who are able to spread khadi will certainly do so. The discussion in the Subjects Committee pleased me greatly. Everyone expressed his views fearlessly. I found that a considerable section expressed its opinion against spinning. Their argument, however, did not appeal to a vast majority. There were no two sections as Swarajists and No-changers in this case. Hence the discussion centred round the merits and demerits of spinning. There were two opposite standpoints. One was in favour of spinning, while the other was opposed to introducing spinning in the right to vote.

The duty of those who have voted in favour of spinning is absolutely clear. They have to prove their faith by steadfast spinning and by spreading khadi in other ways. They will be regarded as having betrayed Kathiawar and myself if, in spite of having so voted, they do not spin regularly. On the other hand, if they spin regularly, by the end of the year they will make non-spinners take up spinning.

Wear Khadi

What is true of spinning is true of wearing khadi. I saw hardly any opposition to wearing khadi. Despite so many votes in favour of khadi it is sad to find so few khadi-wearers in Kathiawar. It is a great pity that khadi is sent out of Kathiawar and that very little is sold locally. However, now that so many votes have been cast in its favour at the Conference, its sale must considerably increase in Kathiawar.

Life Members

There are about thirty-six members of the Kathiawar Political Conference because they have paid a lump-sum contribution of Rs. 5. One of them raised the question of their rights and asked me as the President to give a decision in the matter. As the resolution regarding spinning drops the clauses opposed to it, the question arose whether life members did or did not retain their rights. According to the resolution, clauses which opposed spinning were automatically dropped. The question was a complicated one; however, there was no alternative for me but to give a verdict. I have given the verdict that life members continue to remain members even if they neither spin nor make others do so.

I have not given the decision whether or not the Conference has the legal authority to do away with such rights. It was necessary for me only to decide whether the resolution of the Conference made any difference to the rights of the life members and, as mentioned above, I have given that decision in favour of the life members.

Request to Them

I would request them, however, not to take advantage of this right but, instead, write letters to the Secretary of the Conference informing him of having given up this right and having voluntarily accepted the resolution of the Conference. I am aware that many members did not wish to raise the above question. Many are prepared to spin. Hence, when the Conference has adopted an important change, it is not proper for the life members to disregard it by asserting their rights. This is my humble opinion.

Sir Prabhashankar Pattani[1]

In some respects I regard Sir Prabhashankar Pattani's pledge to spin as a major achievement of the Conference. The words with which he announced his pledge were very solemn. They left a very deep impression on the members. That pledge originated in the following manner. After the final session of the Congress at Belgaum,[2] many persons had come to the decision that they would enrol a certain number of spinning members before the first of March. I had personally undertaken to try and enrol a hundred names in this venture, and I had also said I would try to persuade two additional persons who were thought to be unwilling to spin. As I had to come to Kathiawar in any case, I had hoped to find these persons here. I counted Pattani Saheb among those averse to spinning. When the Subjects Committee accepted the resolution on spinning, I asked for a hundred names and also promised to try and persuade Pattani Saheb to spin. No sooner had these words escaped my lips than Pattani Saheb stood up and took the pledge that as long as he was in good health, he would spin regularly for half an hour before his meal. He then laid down the condition that I should teach him how to spin. I got what I wanted. At the close of the Conference I was to be his guest. The very day after the Conference, I taught him

[1] (1862-1937); Dewan of the former Bhavnagar State; member, India Council, 1917-19

[2] Held in December, 1924

for half an hour. Within that very half-hour, he learnt how to take out threads from the sliver. On the second day, within two hours, he spun 48 yards of fine eight-count yarn and on the third day he spun 27 yards within an hour. On both the days he had his meal only after taking a bath and spinning the yarn. In this manner, if other well-known officials and members of princely families set an example in spinning, it would make a good impression on the poorer sections of the people in the country and make them industrious. I hope that Pattani Saheb's pledge will be fulfilled in all respects.

I should inform you that he will not become a member of the Congress or the Kathiawar Political Conference. Nor did I want or wish him to do so. In my opinion, spinning is related to politics. However, spinning can be undertaken even without political motives. Compassion for the poor, the religious sentiment underlying spinning and its economic implications are acceptable to all. I even wish that Lord Reading[1] would spin. Without any reference to political matters, if the ruler and the subjects both start spinning and using khadi, I am confident that India would automatically come into its own. This is a matter in which all can participate unhesitatingly and be of some service to the country.

COLLECTION OF COTTON

As soon as the Conference was over, Shri Devchand Parekh[2], Shri Manilal Kothari, Shri Barjorji Bharucha and others set out to collect cotton to be supplied to the poor so that they would be required to give only half an hour's labour daily and before leaving Bhavnagar they collected about 275 maunds of cotton. It is hoped that nearly 2,000 maunds of cotton will be collected as gift from Kathiawar alone. I hope that this drive for collecting cotton will be enthusiastically carried out and those who can give will not hesitate to do so.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 18-1-1925

[1] 1860-1935; Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1921-26

[2] The Secretary of the Conference

7. SPEECH AT BHUVASAN

January 18, 1925

What hopes does a man entertain and what is he required to do? I do not want to think about your unhappiness and mine. We had hoped to do a great deal of service to India through Bardoli.[1] But no one knows how many things man proposes and God disposes. We are puppets in His hands.

Let me say one or two important things. You used to spin a lot and found interest in carding. Shankerlal Banker[2] used to live in your midst. Just now while at my meal I asked him how things stood with you then. He told me that you used to say, "If nothing else, we have learnt the *mantra*[3] of khadi. We sow the best seed for growing cotton. We know the technique and we have the time. Why then should we not make our own clothes?"

That is a good thing. Moreover, I wish that as Bardoli District is self-sufficient in the matter of food, so must it become in cloth; that the children, women and men of Bardoli become diligent instead of lazy. It is not that people who, by God's grace, are wealthy need alone become industrious. It will be a good thing if those who are not altogether invalid have some work to do. The saying that an idle man calls down ruin is true. We can improve our condition and banish starvation by carding and spinning. You would not know about starvation but the *Kaliparaj*[4] and the *Dublas* might know. Their lot is more or less that of the animals. The condition of those owning land must be better. Judging from the eyes and teeth of those who work with the upper castes for a mere pittance, I do not think their state is too good. In one village I saw many such *Dublas*.

I do not ask others to court prison; only Dayalji[5], Vallabhbhai[6] and I have to do so, and that too not just yet. The

[1] In 1921-22, it was decided to make Bardoli the first unit for mass civil disobedience to mark "the national revolt" against Government's policies regarding the Khilafat, Punjab and swaraj.

[2] Social worker and labour leader of Ahmedabad

[3] Sacred formula with magic efficacy

[4] Literally, black people; the name of a community in Gujarat; *vide* the following item.

[5] Dayalji Desai; a public worker of Surat

[6] Vallabhbhai Patel (1875-1950); Congress leader from Gujarat; first Deputy Prime Minister of free India

reason is that according to the policy initiated in 1921, one was to go to jail only according to one's free will. The present is not the time to go to jail. For jail-going a different set of conditions apply. The common people of India have not yet acquired the qualities necessary for jail-going. I think, however, that stray individuals will serve the purpose. It is my ambition to recruit such persons from among you. But that is another matter. My intention just now is different.

You used to do good work. It was everyone's hope that if nothing else we would be able to produce khadi in Bardoli district. You had realized that our glory lay along this path alone. But now you have forgotten all that. Where has all your faith gone? If someone like me comes along and starts one or two new schemes conceived in haste which you may not like, would you for that reason give up your own worthwhile work?

And that is exactly what you have done. You have set up an Ashram for which a Parsi gave you the money. He was a Parsi like Hatimtai. Few could be as generous as he. He was as charitable as Baliraja and that great man of Iran. I am talking of Rustomji[1]. His celebrated name will endure as long as the town of Sarbhon exists. It was not as if he had anything to do with you. But Parsi Rustomji took no notice whatever of differences of religion. When he got to know that the people of Bardoli were brave and self-denying, he sent the money. And from that money the workers of the two Ashrams you had built are being maintained.

Gujarat's best workers have come to these places—Narahari[2] among them. But it was he who has offended against you. If my son, whom I had appointed my successor, commits an offence, it must be considered my offence—not, of course, if he is a spoilt child. I appointed Narahari my representative. He is a co-worker of mine in the Ashram and I have great faith in him. We brought money from outside and poured it into Bardoli. We made the name of Bardoli famous through the world. The praise of Bardoli was sung all over India. People thought of sending workers there, arguing "If one brought disgrace on the name of Bardoli, it would be a terrible thing." Narahari was one of those who came. You are offended because he started teaching and working for *Dublas*. Let me tell you that if this was his offence, it was an offence worth committing.

[1] An Indian merchant of Natal who took a prominent part in Gandhiji's satyagraha campaigns in South Africa

[2] Parikh

Hindu dharma tells us to have our meal only after serving the poorest of the poor. Our dharma also tells us to tend weak animals. Even if their ribs stand out they should not be killed. Even the ant-holes should be filled with flour. We owe kindness to the animals. A meticulous ethics that teaches this would not expect us to treat men as animals. It would teach us to be compassionate to the poor. One should treat all people as one's kinsfolk. In many old-fashioned families a servant is not a servant but himself a master. How can we fail to feed his children who are like our own?

Who am I? Who is Narahari? No one can be imposed upon you. Narahari, Jugatram and others did not come here to lord it over you. But what can they do if they feel unhappy? What can a wife do if the husband turns cruel and beats her? She would weep and not eat. If a man loses his temper, is he to blame for it or God? I speak from experience. I am married and have known the happiness of family life. If there is a quarrel between husband and wife, she would either call him names or weep. Narahari has behaved like a woman and stopped eating. You thought that Narahari has been tyrannizing over you. Nothing of the sort. He has offered satyagraha. One who normally offers satyagraha against the Government has now offered it against you. But there is no place for fasting in the satyagraha against the Government. You have noticed that I myself do not fast [in this manner]. I did fast at Bombay but that was against our own people—the champions of the Congress and the Khilafat.[1] What you have done is to me my death. If we hurt others, if we repeat what the people did at Chauri Chaura[2], it would not be accepted as satyagraha against the Government which is a matter of jail-going. There it was not a matter of awakening sympathy through a fast unto death. The Government's claim over you is that of an enemy. Narahari's was that of service, love and friendship. His heart fluttered; but you were in a rage. It would have been well if you had killed him. But why were you angry with yourselves? Why have you given up khadi? You thought Narahari wanted to pick up a quarrel with you. You could have said that you would do nothing for the *Dublas*. But

[1] Gandhiji had fasted in November 1921 in Bombay. In September-October, 1924, he fasted in Delhi, for securing Hindu-Muslim unity.

[2] A small town near Gorakhpur in U.P. where, in 1922, a violent mob locked up some policemen and burned them to death. Consequently, Gandhiji withdrew the Non-co-operation movement.

what is the point of forsaking khadi and carding? How cruel! How absurd!

I want therefore to tell you that you must take him back and make amends. The atonement would consist in your considering boycott of mill cloth as dharma and in spinning. Narahari asked me, "May we leave Sarbhon?" I said, "No. That would be the act of a coward. If you do that people will get angry. You can't run away from them, or desert your post. You will have to stay there and make them see that you do not want to harm them. That you can do only by serving them, not by running away. Plant yourself firmly and do your work. If no one accepts your work, you should keep on carding, spinning and weaving." I do not know if Narahari is soothed by my words. It is another matter if he can't bear all this but it is his duty to teach the *Dublas* and the *Antyajas* if they ask him. To allay your fears let me assure you that he has no quarrel with you.

I seek an assurance from you also. If one of your hands is in a huff, do not let the other lose its temper. There is neither justice nor sense, neither discretion nor foresight, in letting that happen. That will show a backward-looking mind. I was listening to the questions put to you. You people—living in and around Sarbhon—have no difficulty in ginning and spinning. What a shame if in spite of all this they cannot give 2,000 yards [of yarn]. Surely the Bardoli which talked so much of bravery is not afraid of this. At present all the boys of the Varad National School spin—studies are also going on well. Everyone spins in Sunav. A teacher of Varad spun 70,000 yards by working fifteen hours a day for twenty days. That place is also in Bardoli tahsil.

Do you fear that we intend to deceive you? If you have any such fear, get rid of it. Is there any instance of anyone of us having deceived you? What more shall I say to you?

Sisters, I shall not be satisfied with coconut, yarn and money. I expect many things from the women of Bardoli. I want you to give no place to foreign goods. How good would it be if you wore a sari out of hand-spun yarn? It is through you that I seek *Ramarajya*. How nice it would be if everyone of you became a Sita? Your children must learn both dharma and karma. Members of some of your families remit ill-gotten money from South Africa. But a weaver earns Rs. 40. Your children will be happy if they learn this vocation. Cherish the *Antyajas*. If any woman wishes ill of *Antyajas* she will lapse from the grace of womanhood. If you have any *Dublas* in your household treat them with love and compassion. Give them *roti* smeared with ghee. Prosperity comes to

homes in which the servants are well cared for. See what happens to the man who earns through deceit. Millionaires are left heirless. May God give you such purity of mind and heart that you may understand aright and take to heart the prayer just heard.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 101-6

8. *SPEECH AT "KALIPARAJ" CONFERENCE, VEDCHHI*

January 18, 1925

BHAI JIWANBHAI, BROTHERS AND SISTERS OF "KALIPARAJ" AND OTHER COMMUNITIES,

I have seen many conferences in my time. If fifty men gather, it is called a congress and, if five, it is called a conference. I have seen some exclusively of the people we call lower castes. I have seen many as unostentatious as this, not only in India but in Africa and Europe. But it is for the first time that I have seen such a beautiful and pleasing conference. And for this, the Reception Committee and the volunteers deserve thanks. It is only right that the expenses were kept down to the minimum, for that is proper in our poor country. Alongside of the Conference, you have organized a model exhibition. If after seeing it any Indian leader still has doubts about spinning, I shall look upon him as pitiable. Having once seen it, no one would ever think that spinning and carding are superfluous. If you want to banish poverty, you should realize that these two activities are essential.

Mahomed Ali[1] has wired seeking forgiveness for his inability to attend. You are probably unaware that he held a high post at one time. You know too what happened later. At that time he had tried to share the happiness and sufferings of the *Kaliparaj* people. He longed to renew your acquaintance but he fell ill after that. Moreover, he has to run two journals. He has wired me to seek forgiveness for his inability to be present.

This Conference has been meeting annually for the last three years. Each time similar exhibitions have been organized. I have read all the resolutions of the previous years. This time the

[1] 1871-1931; editor of *The Comrade* and a prominent politician; took a leading part in the Khilafat agitation along with his brother, Shaukat Ali; President of the Indian National Congress, 1923

resolutions have not been drafted. But after a few minutes' talk I find that some resolutions have to be passed.

Kaliparaj or *Kalipraja* does not mean dark-skinned people but those lower communities who have to earn their livelihood through manual labour. These people do not need to call a conference. This is labour's age. One who does not accept labour as noble will cease himself to be noble. In the coming age there won't be any hierarchy.

Today money is looked upon as God. But will it have the same place for ever in the world? Does Satan retain his eminence? Those who fear God have not accepted this. Mammon and Satan are synonyms. Some Shastras say that money has many enemies. I do not say that you need no money at all. You do need some. But everything has its own place. A man who does not produce anything has no place in society. We miss our own role if we exaggerate the role of money in society. When we lose ourselves and make room for money instead, we go astray.

I have said so much about money, but one should not think for that reason that I mean to malign the wealthy; or wish ill to them. The wealthy, too, are our brethren. I want to exact work from them also. If they live recognizing their role in society, we consider that a good arrangement. You are labourers and therefore worthy of reverence. A country where labourers are not respected but despised falls into decay. Here, too, they are not respected.

But this is a period of transition. Many have come to realize that labourers should be given their due place [in society]. India cannot do without labourers, so it is not proper to run them down as *Kaliparaj*. On the contrary they should be given a high place. Some have taken up the business of deceiving the labourers and through them serving their self-interest. Such people have done no good to the labourers. But there are some who have taken to labour and enjoy it. They lead a happy life. One comes across such people. I believe that no one stumbles except through one's faults or wrong doings. We exceed the limit when we do not see our own faults and abuse others. I fear that you are doing something like this. You believe that not you but someone else is responsible for your lot, but in fact no one else is. Ever since I came here I have been telling you that our faults bring about our downfall and our good deeds uplift us. The problem is not how to earn bread—a labourer can never face this problem. One who has a pair of legs and a pair of hands is independent. Who can make him unhappy?

You have two causes of unhappiness. You drink liquor and toddy! You are an example of all the misery that addiction to alcohol can bring. Brothers and sisters of *Kaliparaj*, it is the new fashion to think that not to drink alcohol is a sin. They enjoy saying that if people do not drink, the habit will die out and therefore the trade will disappear. Do not get entangled in this net. Let me remind you that two years ago all of you had taken a vow not to drink. Stick to that. If some doctor tells you that you would die if you do not drink, do not listen to him. The body must perish sometime or other. But the vow must not die. I grant the kind of decline that sets in the body if you don't drink. Once having given up drinking don't go back on your vow. Many persons fall into all kinds of temptations and commit sins. If we are to be free of this, we should not allow the slightest exception to what we consider to be the rules of good conduct. If we leave a hole in the wall, insects, reptiles or thieves might creep in; similarly, if there is any gap in the wall of vows raised to protect the soul, torrents of sin may rush in; and we may repent too late. You should, therefore, shun liquor. Better keep away from it.

Your ignorance is not due to illiteracy. It is not a question whether you can or cannot read and write. Many amongst you do not know how to read but have the wisdom gained from experience. You are simple at heart and therefore misled. It is good to be innocent. Innocence and simplicity are divine qualities. Once the truth is told, the simplest of the innocents cannot be shaken from his belief. In your innocence you believe in ghosts. You believe in my divinity also. Let me tell you that it is wrong to do so. You can get nothing out of my divinity. To do puja to me would be of no avail. Someone will deceive you tomorrow to do puja to someone else. Another will tell you to drink alcohol. A third will swear by me and ask you to give up the spinning-wheel. What will then happen to you? You vow to yourself to abstain from liquor. I am told that by appealing to some superstitions I should encourage you to give up drinking. But the country is full of superstitions, and I do not want to add one more to the lot. If your drinking cannot be stopped without starting a new superstition, it does not matter. What I mean to say is that if you don't give up drinking through your own understanding, your abstinence will not be worth while. I wish you should give up liquor, and so should people in the neighbourhood give up both liquor and meat. The whole world should give up these; but not out of superstitious beliefs, for if you do that,

your abstinence will not last long. One sin cannot be washed off by another. I hoped to help you to rid yourself of superstition and convince you [to give up drink] not for my sake but because it is good in itself. It is your own ignorance if anyone can deceive you. To set you free from this ignorance, I have asked the volunteers to be patient. I counsel patience again today. Take the next step in full knowledge and make others do the same.

You have complained against your Parsi brethren. I dote upon the Parsi community. It is a small community but has earned wide fame. They have many virtues; but have some vices also. Today many Parsi men and women are giving up liquor. Of course, there are still many who drink. Parsis are engaged in the drink trade. In this business they commit sins and atrocities. But what can I say to them? They tempt you, give you gifts and even bribe you. What can I say to that? If it were my business I would do the same. One has perforce to do all kinds of things for one's stomach. The stomach can make us blow someone else's trumpet. That is why I make this speech. It is being written down and will have to be edited. I wish to put life into you.

I have a complaint against you similar to the one against the Parsis. There is a group amongst you which says that not to drink is a sin. You can survive not by fighting with them but on the strength of your vows and austerities. You tell the Parsis that you have given up drinking, and then they would wind up their business. I have many Parsi friends, including engineers, doctors, lawyers and business men as well. One of them was an intelligent and generous business man. He gave a large sum of money. He had started an Ashram also. Even if I persuade the Parsis, someone else may come along tomorrow—say a Christian, Jew, Muslim or Hindu may come and ask you to drink, how can I go on persuading all of them? The best remedy therefore is that I should talk to you and convince you.

I request the Gaikwar and the Vansada Governments to close down the drink shops in their jurisdiction. But to persuade the Princes is a difficult job. Even so I shall try. But they are like the Parsis; so it is difficult to succeed with them. It is their business too and they earn a large revenue from that. But you are their subjects—their children, so to speak. It is my experience that it is easier to persuade the children than the parents. I therefore have faith only in you.

What are the things that will help you to give up drinking? Spinning-wheel is the chief amongst these. I have put all my

faith in the spinning-wheel. If India is to get salvation it will be only through the spinning-wheel. I am delighted to see the young children spinning and this has strengthened my faith in it. And it increases day by day. The means of your livelihood is agriculture but you are poor and find it hard to get food. In these circumstances the spinning-wheel provides the thread of life and also produces peace. When you feel like taking liquor sit at the wheel. As you ply it slowly the craving for liquor will diminish. It will be enough if you do this at my bidding. If the rains fail the crop will wither but the spinning-wheel is ever fruitful. If you serve it well, it will become an *Annapurna*[1].

Along with the resolutions to be passed here, I want you to take a vow. If you concede that abstinence is desirable then take a vow that "we with God as our witness swear that we won't take liquor or toddy and persuade our brethren to do likewise."

And now to the second thing. After explaining to you everything, I want you to take a vow. If you have understood my views on khadi, you, men and women, vow to wear henceforth only hand-spun and hand-woven clothes. It is dangerous to wear foreign cloth. If many among you after leaving this place wear foreign clothes, then it would amount to a condemnation of your witnesses.

Brothers and sisters, I have made you take these two vows. And for this purpose we have made God our witness. I wish that these two vows may bear fruit. It is not easy to keep these vows, but I will show you a device for keeping them; a secret which is the solace of the poor. Many have swum across with its aid. I have told it to *Antyajas* and *Dharalas* in Sojitra. Get up early in the morning, rinse your mouth, wash your face, clean your teeth, remove the mucus of the eyes and take the name of Rama. Rama means God. Repeating *Ramanama* is a sovereign remedy. We must pray to him "O Rama! let me stay pure and help me keep the vows I have taken at Vedchhi." Even if you are tired and feel sleepy [at night], take the name of Rama for a minute and tell Him, "It is through your help that I have been able to keep my vows. I should not smell of liquor even at night, neither in my dream. And so, too, of foreign cloth." Then you need have no fear of ghosts. Rama does not need a coconut from you. His hunger is for your love. He is seated in the hearts of all men. You should know him. This clock is ticking. But Rama

[1] A name of Goddess Durga, the mother who is worshipped as the giver of food

does not have to make such noise. May He shower blessings on you all.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 107-13

9. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI[1]

SARBHON,
Posh Vad 9 [January 19, 1925]

I do not press anyone to observe *brahmacharya*; in fact, I am indifferent. I cannot accept the position that it is the duty of parents to arrange the marriages of their young ones. I am of the opinion that parents should assist them in thus "settling down".

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 66

10. NOTES

NOT 25,000

Maulana Zafar Ali Khan[2] wires as follows:

> On my return to Lahore I have seen it announced in local papers on authority of *Young India* that I promised you twenty-five thousand spinning Muslim Congress workers by end of this year. I am afraid there is a misunderstanding somewhere. Perhaps my language was not sufficiently clear. All I promised was that I would strain every nerve to place the services of ten thousand Muslim volunteers at your disposal before your term of office expires and I stick to this offer.

I gladly print this wire. There was no misunderstanding, so far as I am concerned. The offer was so striking that I warned the Maulana against being over sanguine. He stuck to his guns. The promise was too good to be withheld from the public. But the offer was a free gift. And no prudent man will look a gift-horse in the mouth. As things go even ten thousand volunteers is a good

[1] 1894-1951; son of Anandbehn, Gandhiji's sister's daughter; co-worker of Gandhiji; Secretary, Bombay Congress Committee, 1922-23

[2] President of the Punjab Khilafat Committee

and encouraging number. Let me remind Maulana Saheb that one must be a spinner to be a volunteer. That is an old Delhi resolution stiffened at Ahmedabad Congress in 1921. I shall therefore be satisfied with ten thousand Mussalman volunteer spinners spinning every month two thousand yards of good yarn with clock-work regularity. I do not doubt that if the Maulana secures ten thousand spinners, he will have no difficulty about getting even twenty-five thousand. For once the spinning movement catches, it will gather strength like a snowball.

SOME CONFERENCES

Last week, I had the honour of attending several conferences which deserve more than a passing notice. They were Petlad District Farmers' Conference held at Sojitra and presided over by Dr. Sumant Mehta[1] and also *Dharala*, i.e., Baraiya Kshatriya Conference, Ladies Conference and Untouchables' Conference at the same place and a *Kaliparaj* Conference at Vedchhi near Bardoli. At all these conferences khaddar was much in evidence. The special feature of the Farmers' Conference was Dr. Sumant Mehta's offer that he would intern himself in the Petlad District for one year if he got forty wholetime workers for the year. He was taken at his word and he has over forty-five earnest volunteers at his disposal for the whole year. This Conference had four classes of visitors, one of which could gain entrance by paying a fixed quantity of hand-spun yarn. The Conference cost the Reception Committee very little money. The pavilion was spacious and unpretentious. Of course there were no chairs, the wood-work and cloth, chiefly old khaddar, were lent. Labour was volunteered. One of the citizens opened a free kitchen for the strangers who required food. The guests were taken over by another citizen and the delegates by a third. The arrangement proved thoroughly satisfactory. Order was admirably kept by volunteers from Professor Manik Rao's pupils from his gymnasium at Baroda. The proceedings were brief and to the point. The Chairman of the Reception Committee took about fifteen minutes during which he read extracts from his printed speech. The President took not more than thirty minutes for his address. Not a superfluous word was spoken at the meeting. The officials looked more like servants than like leaders. The resolutions were chiefly concerned with things to be done by the people themselves.

[1] A political and social worker of Gujarat

"DHARALAS"

Dharalas are a fierce military tribe in Gujarat. Their occupation is chiefly farming. But through economic distress they have taken to thieving. Murder is not an uncommon thing among them. The wave of self-purification that passed through India in 1921 could not fail to touch them. The class of workers that has come into being are working in their midst with the sole intention of carrying out internal reform among them. The brilliant satyagraha movement initiated and led so successfully by Vallabhbhai during 1923 brought about great awakening among these people. Their Conference at Sojitra was one of the fruits of the reform. They assembled in their thousands. They listened to the proceedings in perfect silence. The resolutions carried were about abstaining from intoxicating drinks and drugs, from selling their daughters in marriage and from abduction, a habit which seems to be rampant among them.

THE UNTOUCHABLES

The untouchables of Sojitra and surrounding places met, too, in the same pavilion. The leaders occupied the platform. The touchables mixed freely with the untouchables. The resolutions referred to abstention from drink and to wearing khaddar. It was a bold thing on the part of the organizers to have lent the pavilion for the Untouchables' Conference. For the Petlad District, I discovered, is not free from prejudice against untouchables.

WOMEN IN CONFERENCE

This Conference was a stirring sight. *Patidar*[1] women observe modified seclusion. Sojitra has a population of not more than seven thousand. There must have been present nearly ten thousand women. I have hardly known a women's meeting more largely attended even in big cities. These ladies listened to the speeches with attention and without noise. Often I have found it difficult to secure silence at ladies' meetings. This meeting was therefore an agreeable surprise to everybody including the organizers. No resolutions were taken at this Conference. Speeches were chiefly devoted to khaddar and the wheel. The Farmers' Conference lasted five hours spread over two days. The others lasted an hour each.

[1] A community of cultivators and farmers

"KALIPARAJ"

Whilst the arrangements for the Conference at Sojitra were simple and effective, those at Vedchhi surpassed all expectations. The remark immediately escaped my lips that I had not seen a conference so grand as at Vedchhi for its simplicity, naturalness and artistic beauty. He who selected the site and conceived the whole arrangement was undoubtedly an artist child of nature. The spot selected lay on a river bank. The river ran between a row of homely hills shaded with trees and shrubs. The bed of the river was sandy, not muddy. The main platform was erected in the waters of the river. It rose nearly eight feet high. A sand-bag was the first step to the platform. The whole meeting lay in front of the platform, the people occupying even the ridge of the hill opposite. The decorations were all bamboo and green leaves. There was not a single portrait arranged anywhere, not a scrap of paper was used for decoration, and not even yarn. Yarn is out of place for such decorations and much too valuable to be wasted. The canopy was split bamboo and green leaves. The effect was soothingly beautiful. On either side of the road that lay in front of the platform, huge masses of men and women, over twelve thousand, sat in perfect silence. There was no entrance fee. All were delegates. There was no distinction between delegates and visitors. (I don't present this fact for imitation. Here it would have been cruel to have made the distinction which in organized bodies is inevitable.) A little distance from the meeting a long strip of the bank alongside of the line of hills was occupied for the charkha exhibition. Old men and old women and little boys and little girls ranging from five to ten years were plying the wheels. There was method about having only old people and youngsters. The middle-aged spinners were busy rendering service as volunteers all drawn from the *Kaliparaj*. Near the row of charkhas was a portion allocated for khaddar manufactured in Gujarat. There was therefore no question of having the fine Andhra khaddar. Those of the *Kaliparaj* who wore khaddar used only the coarse stuff. A very small portion contained pictures of the all-India leaders and a selection of literature. The thing cost literally nothing. The bamboo and the leaves belonged to the people. They brought the material and arranged it under supervision and without remuneration. No arrangement had to be made for victualling the thousands who came either on foot or in carts, the nearest railway station being twelve miles off the Conference ground. The people brought their own cooked or uncooked food.

They camped in the open wherever they liked. Everything was done without bustle and without noise.

The business done was also natural and simple in the extreme. Nothing was to be put before the people that was not suited to their needs.

Their Two Vows

This was the third year of their Conference. At all their Conferences only a limited number of resolutions were adopted. There was one about drink which is the curse of these people, another about khaddar and a third about discarding stone ornaments worn by their women. The resolutions about drink and khaddar were in the nature of vows. The audience solemnly undertook themselves not to drink and gently to persuade their neighbours to do likewise. The other vow bound them to ply the wheel and to wear hand-spun to the exclusion of all other cloth and to persuade others to do likewise. I took pains to see that they understood what was being said and what they were asked to commit themselves to. Volunteers were sent to the farthest ends of the meeting to ascertain whether they were following the proceedings. The wind being favourable the voice carried exceptionally well without much effort. They, both men and women, took the vows with God as their witness. Let the reader understand that they had been passing these resolutions for the past two years. Almost all of them had some part of their dress in khaddar. They had taken to it readily and intelligently. Hundreds had learnt how to spin. Some of the young men were trained at the Ashram at Bardoli to become expert carders, spinners and weavers. A few even earned their livelihood by weaving. The audience was therefore really prepared for the vow regarding khaddar and spinning as it was regarding intoxicating drinks.

I closely examined an old man of sixty to know what actuated him to spin after a hard day's toil on his farm. He spins at the rate of about four to five hours per day. He needs little sleep. He therefore spins at night and gets up early again to be at the wheel. I thought he would tell me that he was spinning for pleasure or for others. I was agreeably surprised to find him give me an economic reason. He said, "I spin for myself. I grow my own cotton. Now I weave my own clothes in my own family and save ten rupees per head per year." The sight of these people organizing all the processes for themselves should convince the hardest unbeliever of the necessity of hand-spinning and khaddar. Here in the midst of the most ignorant villagers vil-

lage organization of the trust type is quietly going on. It is revolutionizing their lives in every department. They are learning to think for themselves.

AFTER THE MEETING

I held the meeting of the elders after the Conference was finished. Over thirty of them including ladies gave their names as workers. They are themselves pledged to spinning, wearing khaddar and to total abstinence; they are each to try to enlist five such inside of five weeks at the end of which they are to meet again to consider how further to develop the reform movement.

"RAMANAMA"

It is easy enough to take a vow under a stimulating influence. But it is difficult to keep to it especially in the midst of temptation. God is our only Help in such circumstances. I therefore suggested to the meeting *Ramanama*. Rama, Allah and God are to me convertible terms. I had discovered that simple people deluded themselves into the belief that I appeared to them in their distress. I wanted to remove the superstition. I knew that I appeared to nobody. It was pure hallucination for them to rely upon a frail mortal. I therefore presented them with a simple and well tried formula that has never failed, namely to invoke the assistance of God every morning before sunrise and every evening before bedtime for the fulfilment of the vows. Millions of Hindus know Him under the name of Rama. As a child I was taught to call upon Rama when I was seized with fear. I know many of my companions to whom *Ramanama* has been the greatest solace in the hour of their need. I presented it to the *Dharalas* and to the untouchables. I present it also to the reader whose vision is not blurred and whose faith is not damped by overmuch learning. Learning takes us through many stages in life but it fails us utterly in the hour of danger and temptation. Then faith alone saves. *Ramanama* is not for those who tempt God in every way possible and ever expect it to save. It is for those who walk in the fear of God, who want to restrain themselves and cannot in spite of themselves.

THE MODEL SCHOOLS

To hearten those teachers and pupils who are frightened at the Congress definition of a national school or college, I would like to mention two schools whose teachers and pupils I met during these conferences. One is at Sunav, a village in Anand

Taluka and the other at Varad in Bardoli Taluka. In both these schools all the boys are zealous spinners. In Varad the boys card their own cotton and make their own slivers. They are regularly giving some yarn to the All-India Khadi Board from month to month. I was able to have a long chat with the Sunav boys whom I found to be exceptionally intelligent. They knew why they were spinning. The contribution they gave for the sake of the poor, and they spun otherwise in order to be self-contained so far as their clothing was concerned. I would invite the curious to visit these schools and find out for themselves how they are working. Their position was at stake when the Gujarat Vidyapith insisted on their taking untouchable boys. The teachers braved the storm. Some boys have left but the schools are flourishing. At Varad the parents who had withdrawn their boys on the admission of untouchables have now undertaken to send their children back to the national school. There need be no fear of national institutions suffering because of the definition of the Congress, if only the teachers and managers will combine firmness with gentleness, humility and toleration.

Young India, 22-1-1925

11. *AN APPEAL*

The reader will find something about *Kaliparaj* in my usual weekly notes. Many outside Gujarat may not know the meaning of *Kaliparaj*. It literally means black people. The name seems to have been given to a portion of the people of Gujarat by those who regarded themselves as superior to them. So far as colour is concerned the *Kaliparaj* are no blacker than or different from the rest. But today they are down-trodden, helpless, superstitious and timid. Their great vice is drink. By far the largest number of them belong to the Baroda State.

It was among these people that a great awakening came three years ago. Thousands left off drink and even flesh-eating. This proved too much for the liquor dealers. Most of these were Parsis. It is said that they tried all the means possible to induce the teetotallers to revert to drink and that they succeeded to a great extent. The officials, too, are said to have conspired against the reformers. And now, whether as a result of these efforts or otherwise, there has sprung up among these people a party who teach them to regard temperance as a sin and by ostracism and other means seek to break the spirit and the zeal of those who are

battling against themselves and an evil habit handed down from generation to generation.

One of the resolutions passed at the meeting of which I have taken a fairly long notice elsewhere was to ask the States of Baroda, Dharampur and Vansda and also the British Government to close down all liquor shops. This is a big order, it will be said. The attempt of a whole nation to bring about total prohibition, it will be added, failed miserably. How then can the ineffective appeal of a handful of helpless men and women succeed? There is a great deal of force in the argument. And yet the two attempts stand on a different footing. The attempt of 1921 was directed against the British Government by non-co-operators who were bent on wresting power from the Government. It was moreover directed by those who had not themselves suffered from the existence of liquor shops. Now the appeal comes from those who have been a prey to the evil. It is an appeal from the powerless to the powerful. It is addressed to all the governments concerned and not merely to the British Government. These men are no non-co-operators. They do not know the difference between co-operation and non-co-operation. They slave for others unwillingly, almost unknowingly, and often under fear of oppression. They do not know what swaraj is. To them giving up drink and removal of the temptation in the shape of liquor shops is swaraj. Their appeal therefore is on humanitarian grounds and should prove irresistible.

As President, I am bound to give effect to their resolution addressed to the Governments concerned. The appeal to the British Government can only be through the Legislators. It is open to the Councillors to forgo the liquor revenue even though they may have to run the risk of starving the education department. I invite them to see the people themselves and have an ocular demonstration of the evil that is corrupting a whole race of men and women. They must dare to do the right thing if they will save their countrymen.

It is different with the States of Baroda, Dharampur and Vansda. They can, if they will shut up the liquor shops and save their people and themselves from destruction. I use the pronoun "themselves" deliberately, because the destruction of a large body of people in small States means their own destruction. Will they not listen to the appeal of those who want to be helped against themselves?

And of the Parsi liquor dealers? I know that it is with them a question of livelihood. But they belong to one of the most

enterprizing of races among men. They are resourceful and intelligent. They can easily find other honourable means of livelihood. Men and women have been known before now to give up questionable callings and take up work or professions conducive to the moral growth of society. I claim the right to speak to the Parsis, for I know and love them. Some of the best of my associates have been and are Parsis. They have done much for India. They have given Dadabhai[1] and Pherozeshah Mehta[2]. More is expected of those who do much. Let the Parsi liquor dealers commence by abstaining from interference (assuming the truth of the charge) with the reform.

Young India, 22-1-1925

12. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

ON THE WAY TO DELHI,
Posh Vad 13 [January 22, 1925][3]

BHAI FULCHAND[4],

I have your letter. This time I shall certainly stay for a few hours in Wadhwan City.

If what you write about Pattani Saheb is true, it is a sad thing. I heard such an allegation for the first time at Bhavnagar, but I paid no attention to it. But I cannot brush aside your writing. But I want to know from you if your knowledge is based on direct evidence. If you did not yourself see it, how did you know about it? What kind of adultery is it? I want to know this because I have had very high notions and favourable impressions about Pattaniji.

Your views that one should not stay at the house of such an adulterous officer or at a prince's place are not proper. How can we sit in judgment over others? You know that there are all sorts of allegations against many people at whose houses I put up. Some of these are true, I know. For this reason people go into

[1] Dadabhai Naoroji (1825-1917); the first Indian to be elected member of the British Parliament in 1893; President of the Indian National Congress thrice, in 1886, 1893 and 1906; author of *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India*

[2] 1845-1915; one of the founders of the Indian National Congress, its President in 1890

[3] The letter was written soon after Gandhiji's visit to Kathiawar in January 1925.

[4] An inmate of the Satyagraha Ashram; a political and constructive worker of Kathiawar

the solitary forest and stay there. But so long as we want to remain in society, we cannot behave as you would wish.

I am not telling you all this from the practical point of view, but from the spiritual. It is our duty to stay wherever our host puts us up; but we may not stay with those who by putting us up with them seek our countenance for their immoral conduct.

But this is an exception. Suppose you or I have committed adultery in thought, don't we put up at one another's place?

In this world full of sin who is there so sinless that sitting on a high pedestal he can despise others? I do not give anyone testimonials such as you imagine. If a well-known courtesan plies the spinning-wheel, I would certainly praise her for doing so; but that would not mean that I gave her a certificate for chastity.

"God has made this world, both *jada*[1] and *chetana*[2], full of shortcomings. Like the proverbial swan which separates milk from water and takes only the former, a good man accepts the good and rejects the evil."

Our duty is to recognize merit and sing its praises. The world is hardly likely to be deceived by testimonials. I certainly have not given any testimonial of purity to Pattaniji. But my mind was led to give it. It was at Trapaj[3], that I was pleasantly surprised to see his simplicity, his deep knowledge, his firmness, etc. In spite of all this, however, he may be impure. In that case, I must give up the feeling of respect that I came to have for his purity of character. Your letter will be useful to me for my future conduct. What has happened has been, I believe, quite proper. Even if I come to believe that he is an adulterer, when I go to Bhavnagar for public work, I shall put up at the State Guest House if he puts me up there. I shall stay even in his own house, if he lodges me there. I do believe to a certain extent about the immorality of the Prince of . . . .[4] But if he puts me up at his place, I would certainly stay there and I would not think that I was committing any sin. My non-co-operation is with sin, not the sinner; with Dyerism, not with Dyer.

I am afraid I have not been able to explain everything I wanted to. But try to understand this much. For the rest, you may come here and ask me personally. You may write and ask,

[1] Material or inconscient

[2] Conscient

[3] A village about 17 or 18 miles from Bhavnagar

[4] Name omitted

if you like. The path of ahimsa is very difficult; it is sharper than the edge of a sword. There must be compassion in ahimsa. Tulsidas[1] considered himself to be the most sinful person. "Who is there so crooked, so wicked and so sensual as I?" sings Bhakta Surdas[2].

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C. W. 2826. Courtesy: Shardabehn Shah

13. *LETTER TO REVASHANKER ZAVERI*

Posh Vad 13 [January 22, 1925][3]

RESPECTED REVASHANKERBHAI[4],

As I have already told you, instead of writing a letter I sent a telegram to Prabhashanker[5]. After reading his letter I thought it proper to see Nanalal. He was of course to come to Bardoli but did not. Nevertheless, he came and saw me [here] yesterday. I, therefore, wired to Prabhashanker and to Doctor[6] also. I have written saying that a sizable amount will be deposited in Chi. Champa's name. I have also written a letter to Prabhashanker.

Tulsi Maher[7] told me that carding is slightly laborious. Once the hand is accustomed, there is no labour at all. The [carding-] bow may be made smaller. If you card like the women of Andhra, there would be no difficulty.

Respects from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1263

[1] A 16th-century Hindi poet; author of *Ramacharitamanasa*
[2] A 16th-century poet of Krishna *bhakti* cult
[3] From the postmark
[4] A business man of Bombay and brother of Dr. Pranjivan Mehta
[5] Father of Champa who was to be married to Dr. Mehta's son
[6] Dr. Pranjivan Mehta, Bar-at-law and jeweller who, from the days of Phœnix Settlement till his death in 1933, rendered financial help to Gandhiji in his activities
[7] An inmate of Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati

14. SPEECH AT ALL-PARTY CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING, DELHI

January 23, 1925

The All-Party Conference Committee convened[1] as the result of the discussions held at Bombay in November last met here last evening (Friday) at the Western Hostel, Raisina. Mr. Gandhi presided. A lively discussion took place on the proposal of Mr. Gandhi to appoint a sub-committee to suggest lines of agreement between Hindus and Mussalmans and among all the political parties and also to draw up a scheme of swaraj. Speeches were made by the representatives of the various communities and parties who explained their respective positions and the Conference eventually adjourned till Saturday afternoon.

The Conference was attended by a large number of members and also by several Indian members of the Central Legislature. . . .

Mr. Gandhi explained that the objects of the Conference were to explore the avenues of communal and political unity and formulate a scheme of swaraj. He suggested the appointment of a sub-committee to suggest the lines of an agreement. . . .

Mrs. Besant[2] thought it would be impertinent, nay, anarchical, on the part of the Conference suddenly to make new resolutions which might run counter to those passed by the Belgaum Congress[3] and thereby unseat Mr. Gandhi from his presidentship.

Mr. Gandhi said his suggestion for a Committee did not go so far as Dr. Besant feared and that the suggestion was made to show that Congressmen were not hidebound to anything but the new franchise or the creed of the Congress. Those could not be lightly altered merely because the proposed sub-committee might come to certain conclusions. The Congressmen knew their mind and they would prosecute their programme but if the non-Congressmen joined the Congress and convinced them of the error of their ways and of the propriety of altering the creed or the franchise then they could undertake to call a special session of the Congress. Personally he did not think any alteration was called for. . . .

Mr. Gandhi, at the request of Mr. Dalvi, read the Liberal Federation's resolution that the Liberal Party would rejoin the Congress only, (1) if the object of the Congress, defined as Dominion Self-government, was to be attained by

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXV, pp. 338-40.

[2] 1847-1933; Leader of the Theosophical movement; founded the Home Rule League in 1916; President, Indian National Congress, 1917

[3] *Vide* Vol. XXV.

constitutional methods; (2) If non-co-operation and civil disobedience were definitely abandoned as also the yarn franchise; and (3) if the Swaraj Party were not constituted as the only accredited representatives of the Congress in the legislatures.

Mr. Gandhi added that the suggestions from other political bodies were almost along the same lines. . . .

The Bombay Chronicle, 26-1-1925

15. *DRAFT CONSTITUTION OF ALL-INDIA COW-PROTECTION SABHA*[1]

[*January 24, 1925*][2]

ALL-INDIA COW-PROTECTION SABHA

OBJECT

Whereas the Hindus have failed in cow-protection which is an obligation imposed on them by their religion, and whereas the cows in India and their progeny are deteriorating day by day:

The All-India Cow-protection Sabha is formed for the proper fulfilment of the religious obligation of cow-protection.

The object of the Sabha shall be to protect the cow and her progeny by all moral means.

"Cow-protection" shall mean the protection of the cow and her progeny from cruelty and slaughter.

Note: It will be against the fundamental policy of the Sabha to bring physical force or pressure to bear on those communities whose religion does not prohibit, or regard as obligatory, cow-slaughter.

MEANS

The Sabha shall carry on its work by the following means:

1. By pleading with those who may be ill-treating cows, bullocks, etc., and by carrying on propaganda against such ill-treatment by means of leaflets, lectures, etc.;

2. By taking charge of diseased and disabled cows and oxen from their owners wherever the latter cannot afford to maintain them;

[1] Prepared by Gandhiji; *vide* Mahadev Desai's "Delhi Letter" in *Navajivan*, 8-2-1925.

[2] *Vide* "All-India Cow-protection Sabha", 15-3-1925 and "Cow-protection", 9-4-1925.

3. By superintending and inspecting the administration of existing *pinjarapoles*[1] and cow-protection institutions, and by helping in their better organization and management, as also by establishing fresh institutions;

4. By breeding model cows and draught cattle by means of cattle farms, etc., and by providing clean and cheap milk through properly kept dairies;

5. By opening tanneries for tanning hides of dead cattle and thereby stopping or reducing the export abroad of disabled cattle;

6. By enlisting men of character and education in the cause, and founding scholarships, etc., for training them in the work;

7. By holding an inquiry into the causes of the disappearance of grazing lands and into the advantages or disadvantages thereof;

8. By investigating into the necessity or otherwise of the practice of castrating bulls, and if found necessary and useful, investigating into the possibilities of discovering a harmless method of castration or a wholesome modification in the present method;

9. By collecting funds; and

10. By taking whatever other steps may be necessary for the work of cow-protection.

Membership

Any person of the age of eighteen years, who subscribes to the object of the Sabha, and

1. who pays to the Sabha an annual subscription of five rupees; or

2. who gives to the Sabha enough time and labour to enable him or her to spin and send 2,000 yards per month of even and well-spun yarn to the Sabha; or

3. who devotes one hour daily to any work that may be prescribed by the Sabha

shall be a member of the Sabha.

Note: In respect of (2), slivers, if necessary, will be supplied by the Sabha.

Administration

The members of the Sabha shall annually elect their president by a majority vote and he shall nominate the secretary and the treasurer.

A Working Committee consisting of not less than five members of the Sabha shall be elected annually at a general meeting to be convened by the president.

[1] Institutions for the care of disabled and useless cattle

The treasurer shall be responsible for the accounts of all the receipts and disbursements, all amounts exceeding one thousand rupees to be kept deposited in a bank of his approval.

Young India, 9-4-1925

16. SPEECH AT ALL-PARTY CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEETING, DELHI

January 24, 1925

The Committee of All-Party Conference resumed its session last [January 24] evening and after important speeches delivered by representative spokesmen including Mr. Jinnah[1], Lala Lajpat Rai[2], and Dr. Annie Besant, a fully representative sub-committee[3] consisting of over forty members was appointed. . . .

Gandhiji, who presided, thought that if the meeting could arrive at a satisfactory, real and honourable solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem and Brahmin and non-Brahmin problem, etc., they would have made a very substantial advance towards swaraj. If the meeting could find a scheme which would commend itself to all parties, they would have taken a very long step towards swaraj. If the representatives present at [that] meeting could see eye to eye on [those] main questions, there would be no difficulty in parties uniting on the Congress platform and making a unanimous demand in the name of the nation. . . .

Mr. Jinnah in urging an early decision gave expression to his surmise that Government would let the Assembly discuss the Reforms Enquiry Committee's Report in February. As much had been made of Hindu-Muslim differences in connection with the work of the Committee, he wanted to tell Government when the time for discussion of the Report came that Hindu-Muslim differences had been made up and they stood united in their demands.

[1] M. A. Jinnah (1876-1948); a leader of the Muslim League; founder and first Governor-General of Pakistan

[2] 1865-1928; Congress leader from the Punjab and a social reformer; founder of the Servants of the People Society; President, Indian National Congress, 1920

[3] The task of the sub-committee was to "(a) frame such recommendations as would enable all the parties to join the Congress; (b) to frame a scheme for the representation of all the communities, races and sub-divisions on the legislative and other elective bodies under swaraj and recommend the best method of securing just and proper representation of the communities in the services with due regard to efficiency and (c) to frame a scheme of swaraj that will meet the present needs of the country." It had the instruction to submit the report on or before February 15. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 26-1-1925

Mahatma Gandhi replied that Mr. Jinnah's purpose would be served by the publication of the sub-committee's report. The sub-committee would soon sit to work from day to day till it finished its labours and prepared a report. . . .

The Hindustan Times, 27-1-1925

17. MY NOTES

KATHIAWAR

Shri Bharucha, who is at present working in Kathiawar, writes to say that he goes around with Devchandbhai every day and collects cotton from different places. As many as 186 spinning members have already been enrolled and more are being enrolled. There is scope for getting much good work done provided the enthusiasm can be fully canalized. Proper arrangements should be made for supplying slivers, for sending spinning-wheels wherever they are required and for training those who lack a proper knowledge of spinning.

I should warn the workers in Kathiawar that I shall be returning there on the 15th of February. I shall expect a great deal to have been achieved in the meantime. Even now, I am imagining the spectacle which will confront me in Rajkot. I wrote in the *Navajivan* a few months ago about the complaint by a Kutchi gentleman that there was no khadi in Rajkot. Will I face the same situation on 15th February?

CORRECT ACCOUNTING

We are collecting cotton instead of money. Hence the system of maintaining accounts is bound to differ. If accounts are maintained after due thought from the beginning, it will facilitate matters greatly in the future. Arrangements have to be made for collecting cotton, stocking it properly and incurring expenses for the various processes through which it has to pass. Moreover, some will hand in yarn spun from their own cotton, while some others will hand in yarn spun from cotton given to them by the Conference. Hence, two sets of accounts will have to be maintained. Then again, the accounts for the yarn that is used should be separate. The account books will multiply in this manner. This work can be done only with patience, forethought and understanding.

SPINNING-WHEELS WORTH A HUNDRED RUPEES

A gentleman raises the question whether those taluks which allow the contribution of two thousand yards of yarn spun by

others should be entitled to the above prize. Although it may not have been clearly stated, the prize is only for those who do their own spinning. The khadi-lover's intention is not to reward that taluk which excels in recruiting members who get their yarn spun by others. I hope that there will be keen competition for this prize. The amount of Rs. 100 is no consideration. It is the prize that is important, not its value. Even Borsad, if it takes it upon itself, can, by making the maximum effort, recruit five thousand members.

"KHEDUTS'"[1] CONFERENCE

I have the courage to use the word *Khedut* as the organizers in Sojitra have spoken of the *Patidars* as *Kheduts*. The custom of discarding old names as contemptible and coining new ones is not worthy of emulation. There is no merit in being called a *Patidar*. *Khedut* is both a sweet and a good name.

It could be said that the *Patidars* of Sojitra became *Kheduts* for at least two days. This is because they took upon themselves the burden of providing the necessary help for the Conference. A *Khedut* is always a labourer. He is great by virtue of his labour. *Patidars*, both great and small, served in Sojitra and thereby added to their own dignity. The workers themselves put up the *pandal*[2] for the Conference. It was apparent that expenses had been reduced to the minimum. Some members shared among themselves the responsibility of providing meals for the guests, delegates and others. In this manner things were better organized and the reception committee was spared that expense. The work of the Conference was facilitated since it was given all necessary facilities by the Baroda Government.

THE PRESIDENT

Dr. Sumant Mehta too looked like a *Khedut*. Wherever one looked, one saw nothing but work and service. The speeches both of the chairman of the reception committee and of Dr. Sumant Mehta were brief. They did not read out the whole of them and saved the time of the Conference by reading out only some parts.

"DHARALAS"

Along with this *Patidar* Conference, separate conferences of *Dharalas*, women and untouchables were also organized. As these had been arranged one after the other, those who wished to attend them all could easily do so. *Dharalas* have now come to regard

[1] Cultivators
[2] Covered enclosure



themselves as *Baraiya* Kshatriyas. If, however, I may advise them, I would ask them to stick to the name *Dharala* and sanctify it. No purpose is served by changing a name. Status is not gained by assuming the name but only by acting in a manner befitting the Kshatriyas.

Having made this criticism, I have nothing but praise for the Conference. The *pandal* was overflowing with *Dharalas*; yet, in spite of the numbers, they maintained perfect silence. The resolutions too only dealt with reforms amongst them. The evil customs of taking liquor, forcibly carrying away women and selling brides have been prevalent among them from ancient times; the Conference passed a resolution to give up all the three practices.

It is also the Kshatriyas' dharma to abide by his pledge. The superior kind of "*apalayanam*"[1] consists in ignoring any kind of internal or external danger, and abiding by one's resolve. Courage lies not in wielding the sword but in the strength of one's determination.

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

The number who attended the women's conference at Sojitra exceeded all estimates. One finds that most *Patidar* women observe *purdah*. In spite of this, the Conference pavilion was filled with women. The attendance was enough justification for the Conference. No resolution seemed to be necessary. It should be a matter of satisfaction that they listened attentively to speeches on the spinning-wheel. If a resolution had been proposed hands would have been raised but it was all unnecessary.

"ANTYAJAS"

The Conference of the *Antyajas* was held in the very same place. The organizers deserve to be congratulated on their courage in permitting this Conference to be held in the same *pandal*. It is a good sign that even though untouchability is not yet entirely abandoned by the *Patidars*, the Conference was held under the same roof. Many who were not untouchables attended the Conference. This Conference took the pledge to give up liquor, to ply the spinning-wheel and to wear khadi. Each word in the pledge had been explained to the men and women. Of the latter a large number was present. They had brought incense with them. I was misled by the smoke I saw. I presumed that they were smoking *bidis*[2]. However, I was immediately informed that the smoke rose from

[1] Not taking to one's heels in a battle
[2] Country cigarettes

the incense. There was an expression of joy on the faces of these men and women in the *pandal.*

"KALIPARAJ"

Although the Conferences held at Sojitra were good in their own way, the Conference of *Kaliparaj* left on me a deeper impression. Underlying the former were commonsense, simplicity, economy and skill. All this was also there in the *Kaliparaj* Conference, but in addition it was artistic. I cried out unwittingly: "I have seen many conferences, but in point of unstudied beauty, I have not seen one like this." I see no exaggeration in these words. It seemed as if nature herself had invisibly arranged everything. In my opinion, true art consists in learning from nature without struggling against it. It could be said of Vedchhi village where this Conference was held that it comprises little more than a few wells and a few houses. The *Kaliparaj* however do not live in houses or villages but in their grass huts and fields. The population of Vedchhi could not be more than three or four hundred people. However, as compared to the cluster of grass-huts of the *Kaliparaj*, the cluster of houses in Vedchhi could be said to be fairly decent. In view of this, the Conference was arranged at Vedchhi. Ordinarily a field is chosen as the site of the Conference. Our artists looked around and chose a spot which was filled with natural beauty. A river named Valmiki flows near Vedchhi. It dances along between rows of hills adorned by trees. The organizers of the Conference chose this spot. The main rostrum was placed in the flowing water and, just as branches spring out of a tree, the seats for the delegates were arranged in front of the main rostrum. As it was winter, and, moreover, as the water was cool, this artistic expert argued that not only did the delegates did not require any shade but the afternoon sun at 2.00 p.m. would be welcome to them, hence the golden sky provided the dome of the pavilion and the river sand, the seats. As this river flows on one side of a hill, the bank stretching from the opposite row of hills to the edge of the river is dry. There is no mud on the river bank but only sand. Hence no artificial adornment or carpets and such other things were needed. The canopy above the rostrum was made of bamboos and green leaves. A broad pathway led right up to the rostrum. Bamboos had been used for this purpose too and creepers of the arum plant had been entwined on the path. The first step leading to the rostrum was made of a sack filled with sand. There was not a single picture here and not a single strand of cotton was used for decorative purposes. One

need not add that even decorations made of yarn cannot enhance the beauty of such a spot. Yarn is man-made and is in place in a house. Where the sky is the ceiling and sand the ground, only trees and leaves harmonize with the scene. Moreover, one who loves yarn would not waste it. On the contrary, he would store up even a yard of yarn or a wad of cotton.

Exhibition

A little distance away from the site of the Conference but still on the banks of the river and at the foot of the row of hills, an exhibition of spinning-wheels and khadi had been arranged. Old men and women as well as children, both boys and girls ranging from six or seven to ten years of age, were plying some fifty spinning-wheels. This arrangement too had been well conceived. The youths had become volunteers. Some of the khadi had been spun, woven and dyed by the people of *Kaliparaj* themselves. The rest of the coarse khadi had been sent by the Gujarat Khadi Bhandar. Along with the exhibition, the special flute of *Kaliparaj* was being played, and there were pictures of a few prominent leaders and some literature. Little had been spent on all these arrangements. The red and yellow buntings, etc., made of thin foreign paper which are usually conspicuous in *pandals* could not be seen even if one searched for them. Decorations made of such paper show neither taste nor discrimination. It is like trading one's sleep for sleeplessness. Whenever I see such paper decorations, I am pained at this outrage on art. Even Sojitra could not rise above this.

Tied by Yarn

The *Kaliparaj* is well tied up by yarn. They themselves grow cotton. The people are poor and simple, they wear foreign cloth. However, they have not developed a liking for it. If khadi is available at low price, they would certainly wear it. As the sari worn by the women is short, with the lower hem tucked into the waistband, it weighs less. Hence, the spinning-wheel and the propaganda for khadi seem to be popular among these people. A sixty-year old peasant, even though he looks after his field, regularly spins till late at night and at dawn. He had his own clothes made out of the yarn and he wishes to give what remains to his children. In this manner the goal is for one family after another to spin and weave for themselves. When I asked this old man the reason for his spinning, he replied that it was in order to save money. He saved Rs. 10/- which was his annual expense on clothes.

Drinking Liquor

Kaliparaj means black people. They are not so called because they are darker than those belonging to other castes. Those belonging to the higher castes, however, showed contempt for them; hence the name. Today they are in a very pitiable plight. Timidity, superstition and addiction to drink are ruining them. In spite of the fact that they live in jungles, they are afraid of everyone and everything. Drinking liquor is their greatest failing. Toddy or liquor is ruining the community. There has been some reform since they too joined in the awakening of 1921, yet much remains to be done. Liquor has taken such hold of them that many regard drinking as something meritorious! When the agitation for prohibition started, a section arose which took upon itself the task of breaking up this movement and began harassing those advocating prohibition. It is said that the Parsi owners of liquor shops were behind this. If *Kaliparaj* gave up liquor for good, that trade would come to a standstill and the owners of liquor shops would suffer. Looking at it from this standpoint it is difficult to blame the owners. However, I believe that I have a right to address them too. I am a great admirer of the Parsi community. I am closely associated with many Parsis. I have great respect for that community. Hence the owners of liquor shops will not misunderstand me. Many persons, we know, had given up a trade which is harmful to others. These gentlemen are enterprizing and resourceful. It is not as if they cannot take to another trade if they give up this one. Whether they go to this extent or not, I hope that they do not join hands with the advocates of liquor in order to keep their business going.

Pledge

This Conference took two pledges after much thinking. The first one regarding the giving up of liquor and the other regarding the wearing of khadi and spinning of yarn. The pledges have been taken with God as witness. Despite this, they will succeed only if volunteers keep working ceaselessly.

"Ramanama"

Yet God's mercy works where man's efforts produce no result. Hence I have requested the *Dharalas*, the *Antyajas* and the *Kaliparaj* to chant the name of Rama. They should wake up in the morning before sunrise, brush their teeth, rinse their mouths and pray to God asking Him to help them in the fulfilment of their pledges, and they should chant the name of Rama. The same should be

repeated before going to bed at night. My faith in *Ramanama* streches back over many years. It has proved a panacea for some friends. It has saved them from many mental anxieties. One who cannot articulate properly, one who cannot remember the *Dvadasha Mantra*[1], one who finds it difficult to pronounce the word *Ishwara*[2], even for such a person, chanting the name of "Rama" is easy. I believe that whoever chants that name with faith is well protected. May *Ramanama* bring good results to these men and women.

THE DUTY OF BARDOLI

I have just returned from Bardoli taluk. I was reminded of past events and past promises. I was unhappy but, being an optimist, I was not disheartened. Hence I have returned with renewed hopes regarding Bardoli.

Bardoli could do anything if it wished to. The *Patidars* of that place are far-sighted. Many of them have gone as far as South Africa and undergone sufferings. The taluk is financially well off. Excellent cotton is grown there. A great deal of effort has been put into this taluk. Volunteers from other parts of Gujarat have gone and settled down there. Ashramas have been built. Money donated by the late Parsi Rustomji has been spent there. Bardoli is famous throughout the country.

What will the *Patidars* of such a place do? If they choose to do so, they can introduce the spinning-wheel in each home, spin their own cotton, wear clothes woven out of it and boycott foreign cloth. This task is child's play for Bardoli.

Kunvarjibhai and Laxmidasbhai have taken the first step. They have both entered into a pact under which one provides the cotton and the other gets it woven. They have made this division of labour. Kunvarjibhai has pledged himself to collect 2,000 maunds of cotton, Laxmidasbhai to get it spun. If this succeeds, Bardoli would shortly become self-sufficient in cloth. May God make Bardoli famous.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 25-1-1925

[1] Formula of 12 syllables, *Om Namo Bhagavate Vasudevaya*
[2] God

18. LETTER TO A GERMAN

January 25, 1925

The one condition for fighting for peace and liberty is to acquire self-restraint. To do that, it is necessary to give up the pleasure of the world.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

19. SILENCE DAY NOTE[1]

January 26, 1925

True, there is cow-protection to some extent in Gujarat, but then Kathiawar is an exception. Nonetheless, there too, when there is a famine, cattle are abandoned. I have seldom been satisfied with our treatment of cattle, whereas in Europe you will hardly find any ground for dissatisfaction. In Arabia the horse is almost worshipped and is religiously taken care of. I do not know why we in India are so heartless towards the cow. The cattle in Europe are simply wonderful.

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] This is in reply to Mahadev Desai's criticism of Gandhiji's speech at the Cow-protection Conference.

20. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

DELHI,
Maha Sud 3 [January 27, 1925][1]

CHI. MAGANLAL[2],

The demand I made in my postcard must be satisfied by someone or other. It is proper that those who give cotton get the yarn. Make suitable arrangements for this. Primarily it should be so arranged that the cotton is obtained from the district itself.

I have had satisfactory talks with Chi. Radha. She is firm in her resolve. However, it is desirable that we are also on the look-out.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]
I shall be in Delhi a few days more.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6092. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

21. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Maha Sud 3 [January 27, 1925][3]

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI[4],

A letter from you, after so many days.

I do not have absolute trust in anybody; it is, however, our duty to trust all our fellow-beings. Do we not expect to be trusted by others? When both the parties are in the wrong, it is very difficult to apportion blame. I have decided upon the only way out of this—to treat the wicked equally well with the virtuous.

[1] In 1925, *Maha Sud* 3 fell on January 27. Also, Gandhiji was in Delhi at this time in connection with the meeting of the All-Party Conference Committee.

[2] Second son of Khushalchand Gandhi, Gandhiji's cousin; assisted Gandhiji in his activities and experiments in South Africa and India; manager of Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati

[3] From the contents, it is evident that the letter was written in 1925.

[4] b. 1894; Business magnate and philanthropist; chairman, Harijan Sevak Sangh

I may have to stay in Delhi for three or four days more. Speaking from the practical point of view, I am not exactly satisfied with the present state of things; spiritually, I am content with doing my duty.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]
Since Dr. Ansari's[1] wife is unwell I am putting up with Sulta[n] Singhji.

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6102. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

22. *INTERVIEW TO PRESS*

DELHI,
[January 27, 1925][2]

In view of the forthcoming debate on the Bengal Ordinance[3] in the Assembly our representative asked Mahatma Gandhi as to his opinion on the Bengal Ordinance and inquired whether in view of Lord Lytton's speech[4] be-

[1] Dr. M. A. Ansari (1880-1936); Physician; President, Indian National Congress, 1927

[2] From the datelines in the reports published in *The Bombay Chronicle* and *The Searchlight*, this interview is presumed to have been given on January 27.

[3] Promulgated to enable the Government to arrest and keep in jail anyone without trial

[4] In a speech delivered in the Bengal Legislative Council on January 7 on the Bengal Ordinance Amendment Bill, Lord Lytton, the Governor of Bengal, had said:

"The only justification for a Bill of this kind is that the welfare of the State as a whole is in danger, that the danger cannot be averted by any other means. . . . Your swaraj government, when it comes, will never have a chance of success if you only admit the right of those who disapprove of it to threaten the murder of those who are responsible for it. . . . If you will persuade these men to sink their weapons in the Hooghly and to abandon terrorism once for all as a political method, we will promise you our whole-hearted co-operation in providing them with other and better ways of serving this country." *The Indian Quarterly Register-1925*, Vol. I, January-June

fore the Bengal Council and the Viceroy's speech[1] in the Assembly he had altered his opinion. Mahatma Gandhi said he had seen nothing to change his opinion.

On the contrary, he held that both the speeches were irrelevant to the issue before the nation, because he held that the powers taken under the Ordinance should not be granted except on an extraordinary occasion and then never without the sanction of the duly elected representatives of the people. In matters where the questions of life and death were concerned and where the liberty of the subject was involved the opinions of functionaries, however highly placed they may be, were of no consequence.

In fact, Mahatma Gandhi went further and said:

India had been used to such emphatic declarations before now. Did not Sir M. O'Dwyer[2] and even Lord Chelmsford[3] practically swear that treason and conspiracy were rampant in the Punjab, and did not Sir M. O'Dwyer claim to be able to prove the existence of general rebellion in the Punjab? We knew now that there was very little warrant for these statements.

Mahatma Gandhi, therefore, was glad that so far at any rate as the Ordinance was concerned Indian opinion was unanimous in condemnation and hoped that the agitation against it would grow in strength day after day such that it would become irresistible.

The Bombay Chronicle, 28-1-1925

[1] Speaking in the Legislative Assembly on January 20, on the Bengal Ordinance Amendment Bill, Lord Reading had justified the promulgation of the Ordinance in order to cope with the terrorist movement in Bengal and the danger from the widespread secret societies. The progress of the movement, he said, involved loss of life among officials as well as innocent citizens and the ordinary law even when enforced by Regulation III had been ineffective in dealing with these crimes. *The Indian Quarterly Register-1925*, Vol. I, January-June

[2] Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, 1913-19

[3] 1868-1933; Viceroy of India, 1916-21

23. INTERROGATORIES ANSWERED

During last month I had a hearty discussion with an English friend who takes deep interest in matters Indian and who is anxious to serve India to the best of his ability. He asked me whether I would publish the gist of our conversation. I readily agreed but asked him to jot down the points he raised which he gladly did. I do not disclose the friend's name as the name does not matter. It is my views that matter because they are exciting some interest at the present moment. If I am a friend of Englishmen, as I claim to be, I must patiently answer all the doubts that may arise in their minds. The English friend put the questions not all on his own behalf but mostly on behalf of those Englishmen who had originally raised them.

Here are the questions with answers.

What is the real purpose of your insistence upon the khaddar programme as a means of obtaining swaraj?

I am interested in the attainment of swaraj only by non-violent and truthful means. This is possible only through a diligent and successful prosecution of the khaddar programme. Swaraj can be peacefully attained only if the whole Indian mass work as with one will, be it on ever so little a constructive and useful thing for ever so little a time. Such an effort presupposes national consciousness. This is possible only through the spinning-wheel. It is not remunerative enough for individuals. It is therefore not enough incentive for an individual selfishly inclined. It is however enough to raise at a bound the national prosperity in an appreciable manner. An increase of one rupee per head per year may mean nothing to the individual. But Rs. 5,000/- in a village containing a population of as many would mean the payment of land revenue or other dues. Thus the spinning-wheel means national consciousness and a contribution by every individual to a definite constructive national work. If India can demonstrate her capacity for such an achievement by voluntary effort she is ready for political swaraj. Any lawful demand of a nation with a will of its own must prove irresistible. I have hitherto said nothing of the immense economic value of the wheel and its product khaddar. For it is obvious. The economic prosperity of India must indirectly affect the course of her political history—even using the word "political" in its narrow sense. Lastly, when the exploitation of

India by Lancashire ceases by reason of the ability of India through the wheel to clothe herself and consequently to exclude foreign cloth and therefore also Lancashire cloth, England will have lost the feverish anxiety at any cost to hold India under subjection.

This means revolutionizing the national taste? Do you expect to persuade your countrymen to give up the use of foreign cloth?

I do. After all I am asking for very little. Millions are indifferent as to what they wear. They merely look to the cheapness of the articles they buy. It is the middle class whose taste has to be revised. I do not think that the substitution of foreign cloth by khaddar is an impossible task for them. Moreover it should be remembered that nowadays it is possible for khaddar to suit a large variety of tastes. And improvement in fineness is making steady progress. I am therefore of opinion that if any constructive work is capable of success, it is the khaddar programme.

What do you mean by swaraj and what are its limitations, if any?

By swaraj I mean the Government of India by the consent of the people ascertained by the vote of the largest number of the adult population, male or female, native-born or domiciled who have contributed by manual labour to the service of the State and who have taken the trouble of having their names registered as voters. This Government should be quite consistent with the British connection on absolutely honourable and equal terms. Personally I have not despaired of the substitution for the present servile condition of equal partnership or association. But I would not for one moment hesitate to countenance or bring about complete severance if it became necessary, i.e., if the connection impeded India's full growth.

To what extent are you committed to the programme and methods of the Swaraj Party?

I am personally committed neither to the programme nor to the methods of the Swaraj party. As a Congressman I recognize its undoubted influence in the country and therefore its right to represent the Congress—a right which it now enjoys by arrangement but which it otherwise might have secured by a party vote.

What are the relations between you and the leaders of that party?

They are of a most cordial character. I give them the same credit for patriotic service and sacrifice that I would like to claim for myself.

It has been stated that you have surrendered to Mr. Das?

The statment is true in the sense that I have avoided a quarrel among Congressmen. But it is not true if it is intended to convey the meaning that I have surrendered an iota of my principles.

Was not your attitude on the Saha resolution[1] different from the one you have now adopted?

Not in the least. At the time of the Saha resolution I was opposing an internal error. At the present moment I am resisting external oppression based on erroneous assumptions. Moreover, my attempt then to secure consistency of conduct and control of the Congress executive by one party must not be confused with my action on the Saha resolution. The two things were totally different and were not even inter-related. As soon as I discovered that the attempt to secure unity of control led to bad blood, I retraced my steps and declared complete surrender to the Swaraj Party.

It has been stated that you have lost your moral authority by your surrender—?

Moral authority is never retained by any attempt to hold on to it. It comes without seeking and is retained without effort. I am not conscious of loss of moral authority, for I am utterly unconscious of being guilty of any single act compromising my moral conduct. What I have undoubtedly lost is the intellectual co-operation of a large number of educated men in my presentation of the means of attaining swaraj, e.g., the spinning-wheel.

Why do you insist upon non-co-operation while every one of the activities has failed? What is the purpose in speaking of its suspension?

I do not insist now. But I do not admit that every one of the activities has failed. On the contrary, every activity of non-co-operation succeeded to an extent. I can speak only of its suspension because to me non-co-operation is a vital principle of life and because in my opinion it had done India and, if you will, the world an amount of good of which, at present, we have not adequate conception and also because, if I found an atmosphere of substantial non-violence and real co-operation among the people and if the end remained still unattained, I should not hesitate to advise its resumption by the nation.

[1] Passed by the Bengal Provincial Conference, paying homage to the "patriotism" of Gopinath Saha who had murdered Ernest Day; *vide* Vol. XXIV, pp. 200-2.

How do you propose to solve the Hindu-Muslim problem?

By constantly insisting upon both the communities cultivating mutual respect and trust and by insisting upon Hindus surrendering out of strength to the Mussalman in every mundane matter and by showing that those who claim to be nationalists and are in an overwhelming majority should stand out in any unseemly competition for legislative or administrative control. I hope also to achieve the end by demonstrating that real swaraj will come not by the acquisition of authority by a few but by the acquisition of the capacity by all to resist authority when it is abused. In other words; swaraj is to be attained by educating the masses to a sense of their capacity to regulate and control authority.

What is your own real attitude towards the English and your hope about England?

My attitude towards the English is one of utter friendliness and respect. I claim to be their friend, because it is contrary to my nature to distrust a single human being or to believe that any nation on earth is incapable of redemption. I have respect for Englishmen, because I recognize their bravery, their spirit of sacrifice for what they believe to be good for themselves, their cohesion and their powers of vast organization. My hope about them is that they will at no distant date retrace their steps, revise their policy of exploitation of undisciplined and ill-organized races and give tangible proof that India is an equal friend and partner in the British Commonwealth to come. Whether such an event will ever come to pass will largely depend upon our own conduct. That is to say I have hope of England because I have hope of India. We will not for ever remain disorganized and imitative. Beneath the present disorganization, demoralization and lack of initiative I can discover organization, moral strength and initiative forming themselves. A time is coming when England will be glad of India's friendship and India will disdain to reject the proffered hand because it has once despoiled her. I know that I have nothing to offer in proof of my hope. It is based on an immutable faith. And it is a poor faith that is based on proof commonly [so] called.

Young India, 29-1-1925

24. *NOTES*

How Not to Do It

Jamiet-al-Tabligh Islam has favoured me with the following translation of a resolution recently passed by it:

> Resolved that the responsibility for the entire series of deplorable events which took place during the recent disturbances at Kohat[1] and which resulted in great loss of life and property to the residents of that place, lies with the person or persons who published at Kohat the offensive and provoking pamphlet which contained vile attacks on Islam and deeply wounded the religious feelings of Mussalmans. The Hindus who fired shots and killed Mussalmans are also responsible for aggravating the delicate situation still further. This Jamiet expresses sympathy with all those residents of Kohat, irrespective of creed and caste, who suffered loss of life or property in the course of these disturbances. As a religious society, this Jamiet feels bound to point out to Mahatma Gandhi and other political leaders that unless scurrilous attacks, in writing or by speech, on religion and founders and leaders of religious movements are absolutely stopped, the creation and maintenance of Hindu-Muslim unity in India will always be found impossible.

I am unable to congratulate the Jamiet on its resolution. It seems that both the parties have made up their minds on the main fact although no impartial inquiry has yet been held. Is it an established fact that the responsibility for "the entire series of deplorable events" lies with "the person or persons who published at Kohat the offensive and provoking pamphlet"? Is it also an established fact that "the Hindus who fired shots and killed Mussalmans are also responsible for aggravating the delicate situation still further"? If the two facts above mentioned are clearly established the Hindus at least are not entitled to any sympathy which the Jamiet shows for the loss in life and property suffered by them. For they have reaped what they have sown. The Jamiet is therefore inconsistent in showing sympathy to the Hindus. And what is the point in the Jamiet telling me and other political leaders that "unless scurrilous attacks on religion and founders of religious movements are absolutely stopped the creation and maintenance

[1] As a result of strained relations between the Hindu and the Mussalman communities, riots had broken out on the 9th and 10th September, 1924, in the city of Kohat in the North-west Frontier Province.

of Hindu-Muslim unity in India will always be found impossible"? If what the Jamiet contends is true, is not the impossibility of unity a fact for the Jamiet to note as well as the political leaders? And must Hindu-Muslim unity be impossible because some person delivers attacks on religion? According to the Jamiet one insane Hindu or one insane Mussalman is enough to make Hindu-Muslim unity impossible. Fortunately Hindu-Muslim unity does not finally depend upon religious or political leaders. It depends upon the enlightened selfishness of the masses belonging to both the communities. They cannot be misled for all time. But I hope that the original resolution of the Jamiet does not read as bad as the translation before me.

Mian Fazl-i-Hussain[1]

A correspondent asks me to give my impressions of the interview I had with Mian Fazl-i-Hussain during my last visit to Lahore. I gladly comply. I had a very pleasant time with the Mian Saheb. His manners were most charming. He was reasonable and plausible in his conversation. He protested against the charge of partiality brought against him by Hindus. He said that he was trying to do tardy justice and that too in an incomplete manner to the Mussalmans. He was accessible to all and was anxious to explain his own position to anybody who cared to study the question. More than this, no man had a right to expect. Whether as a matter of fact there is anything to be said against the Mian Saheb's policy, I do not know. I have not been able to study the question on either side. When I am able to do so I shall gladly publish my opinion of Mian Fazl-i-Hussain's claim that he has done less than justice to the Mussalmans. Sufficient in the meantime for me to feel that in Mian Fazl-i-Hussain one has a gentleman, calm, cool, dignified and reasonable to deal with.

Our Helplessness

Orders are pouring in at the Ashram at Sabarmati for spinning-wheels, spindles, slivers, etc. If we were well-organized, such helplessness should be impossible. Time was when every village carpenter could make a spinning-wheel. Today city carpenters often do not know what a spinning-wheel is like, and they equally often refuse to make one from a model. Similarly, whereas formerly every carder knew how to make slivers, today they

[1] A Muslim leader; member of the Viceroy's Executive Council

shrug their shoulders or want to charge exorbitant prices. But the success of hand-spinning depends upon our resourcefulness and upon the co-operation of the artisans of India. No single institution can meet the growing demand for the wheel and its accessories. Fortunately things are improving but not as fast as they ought. Those who are in need should make a desperate effort to get these things made in their own cities or districts before ordering things from the Ashram. No doubt it is better to get them even from the Ashram than wait for an indefinite period of time for them. So far as slivers are concerned, I agree with Mr. K. Santhanam[1] who showed in his admirable essay that every spinner should make his own slivers. Carding with a small bow is an incredibly simple and easy performance. It is learnt much more quickly than spinning. And good carding invariably adds to the output of yarn and facilitates its evenness. For those who spin for wages carding adds to their earnings. There are carders all over India who can make a full living out of carding. A good carder can earn twelve annas per day—not so a good spinner. Every Congress Committee worth the name must have a depot for making and supplying wheels and the accessories.

In Case of Misappropriation

An Andhra friend writes:

> Many people are taking undue advantage and not paying the amounts due to Congress Committees and Khaddar Boards knowing it for certain that they would not proceed against them in British courts. This of course amounts to misappropriation and cheating if not worse. In view of what you have written already regarding misappropriation of funds, and now the removal of ban on courts, I am quite sure that the Congress Committees can proceed in courts under these circumstances.

I have already given my opinion in such cases. I have no doubt that even when the boycott of courts was on foot it was the duty of Congress Committees to proceed against fraudulent and defaulting debtors. The boycott was not meant for the Congress to commit suicide. It presupposed honesty on the part of those who dealt with the Congress.

A. I. K. B.'s Resolutions

I invite the attention of all concerned to the following resolutions of the A.I.K.B. regarding the working of the Congress Franchise:

[1] b. 1895; Lawyer, journalist and politician; then Secretary, Tamil Nad Congress Khaddar Board

In view of the Congress having made hand-spinning part of the franchise and in order to enable the Provincial Committees to receive facilities in the matter, the All-India Khadi Board resolves that it will be prepared to give the following assistance directly as well as through the Provincial Khadi Boards.

1. The Board will be prepared to supply cotton to any province where cotton is not easily available.

2. The Board will be prepared to consider applications for cotton loans on terms to be arranged.

3. This Board advises the Provincial Khadi Boards to render every possible assistance to enable members to get models for making good charkhas and carding-bows and supply all necessary accessories as also to assist in the matter of getting carded slivers until members make their own arrangements.

4. The Board will, so far as possible, arrange for experts to give the necessary tuition in carding, spinning, etc., under arrangements to be made with the Board.

5. The Board will be prepared to buy yarn from any provincial Congress Committee at bazaar rates or to get it woven for the Committees.

6. The Board will be prepared, if so desired, to supply hand-spun yarn at reasonable rates in connection with the yarn required for satisfying the franchise.

7. The Board warns individuals and committees against buying hand-spun yarn from the bazaar for the purpose of the yarn franchise as the bazaar yarn is likely to be mill yarn or spun from mill slivers and not to be even and well-twisted. (It is possible only for experts to distinguish between mill-spun and hand-spun yarn or to say when yarn is well-twisted; even experts will be unable to say when hand-spun yarn is spun from mill-made slivers.)

8. Lastly, the Board will be prepared to give any further information or help to individuals or committees which it is in its power to give.

Time is running against us. I hope therefore that the Provincial Committees are organizing themselves under the new franchise. Properly worked, its possibilities are immense. But the working requires attention to the minutest details. And when once the organization is in working order, it must grow from day to day in geometrical progression and make the Congress a self-supporting, wealth-producing institution.

Young India, 29-1-1925

25. LETTER TO KRISHNADAS

DELHI,
January 29, 1925

MY DEAR KRISHNADAS[1],

The enclosed is for Pyarelal[2]. I hope you are not worrying about me. I am receiving all the attention I need. Mahadev[3] is not overworked. Deen Dayal has found himself with me again. He has taken over personal attendance and freed Mahadev for the most part for personal correspondance[4]. Private negotiations are now going on for a settlement of the Hindu-Muslim problem. It is difficult to forecast the result. We are here till at least 31st. I hope you are getting stronger daily. It is very cold here and I am glad you are not here. Mr. Andrews is here and will be for two days longer. Tell Kikibehn[5] I was glad to hear that she was taking a regular tailoring class at the Ashram. It distracts her attention and will do[6] good, if she does not overwork herself.

Yours,
BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 5598

26. TELEGRAM TO DR. PRANJIVAN MEHTA

January 31, 1925

TO
DR. MEHTA
GOLDGOD
RANGOON

EIGHTH MARCH WOULD BE MY SILENT DAY AND I AM KATHIAWAR DURING THAT WEEK. WILL TWENTY-SIXTH FEBRUARY DO? AM PRACTICALLY ABSENT UP TO 22ND FEBRUARY.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

[1] Gandhiji's secretary
[2] Pyarelal Nayyar, Gandhiji's secretary, author of *Mahatma Gandhi: The Last Phase*
[3] Mahadev Desai, (1892-1942); Gandhiji's secretary for 25 years
[4] The source has "personal attendance".
[5] Sister of J. B. Kripalani
[6] The source has "go".

27. *A SHAME*

A friend from Tanganyika writes:[1]

It is likely that this picture is completely true. I have personally observed such things happening in the Portuguese territory, i.e., in Delagoa Bay. The Muslims there have opened an orphanage for their children and thus made some provision for them. Hindus hand over their children to the care of Muslims. All these children are brought up as Muslims. This is one way out. I, however, do not approve of this solution. To my mind, the action of both deserves condemnation. In the first place, it is wrong to treat a union of this kind as a marriage. I, for one, regard it merely as a means of sensual gratification. Moral restrictions tend to become lax in a foreign country, since the fear of social opinion disappears. But there is a difference of degree between the guilt of the two parties. The Muslims accept and rear the children of love and bring them up in their faith. If the provision made by the Muslims were not available for the children of the Hindus, the latter would simply starve to death. Since the children are the fruit of mere sensual gratification, their Hindu fathers do not care in what religious faith they are brought up. In my view, a man so blinded by lust has forsaken his religion. It is difficult for me to regard anyone who obeys no moral principle in his conduct to be a religious man. For purposes of census persons born into a certain religion may be regarded as belonging to that religion, but really speaking they have renounced religion. There is nothing apart from conduct which may be defined as religion. It is not the one who repeats the *Gayatri mantra*[2] every day or studies the Vedas that truly belongs to the Vedic religion, but the one who lives according to the teachings of the Vedas is a true follower of the Vedic religion. Some Christians make a deep study of the Vedas and other scriptures, but that alone does not render them true followers of the Vedic religion. In other words, those who recite the *Gayatri* and other *mantras* hypocritically or because they are ruled by superstition, are not followers of the Vedas. Their claim of belonging to any religion can be accepted only if

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had described the plight of children born to Negro women secretly married to Hindus who afterwards abandoned them and left for India.

[2] Prayer to sun-god

they understand the teachings of that religion and follow them in practice to the best of their ability. Judged from this point of view, the Hindus of Tanganyika should be considered to have forsaken their religion.

This is only an abstract solution. In practice, these Hindu or Muslim fathers are regarded as Hindus or Muslims, as the case may be, and so we should find a solution which will work in practice. The Hindu fathers should convert such union into regular marriage and take their children under their loving care and make necessary provision for their education, etc. This is a solution to the problem of the children already born. In future, however, everyone intending to go and live in a foreign country should take his family along with him. For those children, however, whose fathers are altogether heartless, there is no other solution except opening orphanages. Such orphanages should best be opened in the countries in question. We may assume that the mothers of the children will stay with them in the orphanages. These mothers had sacrificed themselves to earn their livelihood. They are, however, not aware of the sinful aspect of their conduct. For, though Negroes have the institution of marriage among them, it is not considered immoral for a woman to offer her body for money. Such women, nevertheless, do feel the mother's love in their heart. We should tend it and encourage them to do their duty as mothers. In these pitiable cases, the child's mother-tongue is different from its father-tongue. Which language should it be taught? The father generally feels little attachment for his children born in this manner and so the latter learn the mother's language. Hence, those in charge of the orphanages should teach these children their mother-tongue. If they are taught both the [father's and the mother's] languages, they will be better equipped to earn their livelihood in future.

The problem of their religion is more intriguing. It does not arise, as we have seen, as far as the Muslim fathers are concerned. But it is the general rule that the children of a Hindu father should be treated as Hindus. I have no doubt in my mind that, following this rule, the children of Hindu fathers should receive instruction in Hindu religion. The children themselves are helpless in this matter. They will assimilate the atmosphere in the orphanages where they are brought up. If these are run by men imbued with a religious spirit, they can instil it in the children.

I hope that the Hindus living in Tanganyika and such other territories will think and consider what their duty is, and do it.

Their first duty is to overcome their lust. This refers to the future. To bring up properly the children already born, to provide for their religious instruction and in every way to do their duty as fathers—this is their duty at all times. Those who can should take their wives with them. A man should judge a woman's condition by his own. If a man cannot endure separation for a long time, neither can a woman. That men and women married at a proper age should not remain separated for a long time needs no proof. In not remaining so lies the guarantee of the purity of their character.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 1-2-1925

28. MY NOTES

Worthy of Emulation

I reproduce the following relevant extract from a reader's letter from Palitana:[1]

What a great advance in reform can be brought about if other [public] servants emulate this example! Through such work one serves both the Ruler and the people, and one's own interest as well. This couple will, by and by, have all their cotton and woollen garments made from yarn and wool spun by themselves. We have noted that among the *Kaliparaj* tribals the annual expenditure on clothes amounts to Rs. 10 for every person. The expenditure in the family of this correspondent must be even higher. He will save considerably on that expenditure and, in the bargain, will have acquired a skill, earned the blessings of the poor and learnt something about the varieties of cotton and wool and how to improve their quality. At this time when spinning and allied activities are making good progress in Kathiawar, I wish that officials of all grades who come into frequent contacts with the public in the course of their work should teach the people, as this correspondent does, to spin and do other work relating to khadi. This friend wants a portable spinning-wheel which can be carried on horse-back. Others, too, are likely to ask for such a wheel. But the right solution is that people in every village

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent, who was an employee in the Palitana State service, had said that he and his wife devoted their spare time to spinning cotton and wool and that the State authorities, far from objecting to his activities, encouraged him.

should have spinning-wheels in their homes. Whether in Kathiawar or elsewhere, there ought to be no village without at least one spinning-wheel. If in a village there is none, arrangements must be made to instal them, so that officials can borrow them and do their spinning. If all the people take up spinning, there should be in the central meeting place in every village two or three spinning-wheels which may be used by the *patels*[1] as also by the poor people and the officials on their visits. Meanwhile, however, the idea of having a portable spinning-wheel which can be carried on horse-back is an excellent one.

Khadi Store

I frequently receive letters about the closure of the khadi store run by the Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee. One such letter is lying before me just now. I notice from it that there is some misunderstanding about this matter. I have never advised that the Provincial Committee should run no khadi store. What indeed I have suggested is that a khadi store which runs at a great loss or in which the loss is increasing, instead of diminishing, should be closed down, and that buying khadi for a store from outside Gujarat should be stopped. This advice is inspired by nothing else but a careful calculation and some knowledge of economics. I cannot, even in my dream, wish ill of other provinces and well to Gujarat. It is, however, of the very essence of the principle of swadeshi that one should serve one's neighbours first. This principle is violated when wheat from the south is preferred to the wheat produced in Gujarat and the procedure, therefore, is detrimental to Gujarat, to the south and to the whole country. The philosophy of khadi had its origin in this principle.

Let us now examine the aims we hope to serve through khadi. The first is that it will revive Indian villages. This can happen only when every village produces its own khadi. This in its turn is possible only if every province produces its own khadi and uses what it produces.

The second aim behind khadi is to bring about a boycott of foreign cloth through it. This can be achieved only if India manufactures all the cloth its population requires. If Indians demand cloth similar to the foreign product, India cannot meet that demand. Indians, therefore, should accustom themselves to wear, with pleasure, such cloth as the country produces. If all the people insist on wearing only khadi manufactured in Andhra,

[1] Village headmen

Andhra cannot meet all that demand and the boycott of foreign cloth can never be achieved. Every province, therefore, should try to produce fine khadi. For the same reason, every province should produce its own khadi. As a general rule it is observed that, so long as there is no demand for a commodity, no effort is made to produce it.

This certainly does not mean that no one should wear or order Andhra khadi. My only point is that the Congress at any rate should always adopt the ideal course. If it wishes, the public will adopt the second best course. If, because the ideal course is difficult, even the Congress does not adopt it, no one else is likely to do, and without such efforts success is impossible.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 1-2-1925

29. SHORTAGE OF SPINNING-WHEELS

I notice that spinning has now spread considerably and, in consequence, there is a great demand for supply of spinning-wheels by the Ashram. The latter cannot provide all the spinning-wheels demanded. Nor can the movement progress in this manner. Each province, each district, each taluk and, finally, each village should be able to boast of a carpenter who can make spinning-wheels. The spindle-holders are now made of string or coir. The benefits of the spinning-wheel movement are not confined to the spinners and weavers. It provides work to carpenters and blacksmiths, too. There will be no section of society which will not share in the benefits.

Need for Volunteers

It is but natural that at this time when a determined effort is made to spread the khadi movement in Maha Gujarat we should require a large number of volunteers. We need both part-time volunteers and full-time volunteers. It is essential that every volunteer should know all the processes connected with spinning. Any persons who wish to offer their services as such volunteers may send their names to me, so that as and when the need arises their services may be utilized. This request for names is not addressed to those who are already working somewhere or other. I invite, however, the names of persons who are able and willing to serve but who have had no opportunity till now. Those

who send their names should also give particulars of their age, aptitude for work, etc.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 1-2-1925

30. TELEGRAM TO GOKALDAS THAKER

February 1, 1925

TO

THAKERS[1], GOKALDAS

MORVI

CONVEY ONE OTHER EARLIER DATE. ACCORDING[LY] JOSHI AMRITLAL NEED NOT WAIT.

MOHANDAS

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

31. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

DELHI,

Maha Sud 8 [February 1, 1925][2]

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter. I am trying to get a better charkha for you. While at the charkha, one can repeat *Ramanama* as well. There is the case of two learned men who saved themselves from [an attack of] madness only by repeating *Ramanama* while plying the charkha. Ultimately, things happen to us according to our aspirations.

Yours,

MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6103. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] Presumably a slip for Thaker

[2] From the reference to the charkha, it is clear that the letter belongs to 1925. Gandhiji was in Delhi on February 1, 1925.

32. PERTINENT QUESTIONS

I printed sometime ago a thoughtful letter[1] from Bengal on the question of untouchability. The writer is still pursuing his diligent search. Now I have a similar search from a Madras correspondent in the form of questions. It is a healthy sign that the orthodox Hindus are moved to an inquiry into this thorny question. There is no denying the earnestness of the framer of the questions. They are typical because there is hardly one among the long list that has not been put to me in my rambles. In the hope, therefore, that my answers may guide the path of the correspondent who claims to be a worker and an earnest seeker, and such other workers and seekers, I make an attempt to solve the many riddles presented by my correspondent.

1. What are the practical steps to be taken to remove untouchability?

(a) To open to untouchables all public schools, temples and roads that are open to non-Brahmins and are not exclusively devoted to any particular caste.
(b) For caste Hindus to open schools for their children, to dig wells for them where they are in need and to render them all personal service that they may need, e.g., to carry on temperance and hygienic reform among them and to provide them with medical aid.

2. What would be the religious status of the untouchables when the ban of untouchability is completely removed?

The religious status would be the same as that of the caste Hindus. They will therefore be classed as Sudras instead of *Atisudras*[2].

3. What would be the relation between the untouchable and the high-caste orthodox Brahmin, when untouchability is removed?

The same as with non-Brahmin Hindus.

4. Do you advocate inter-mingling of castes?

I would abolish all castes and would keep the four divisions.

5. Why should not the untouchables build temples for their own worship, without interfering with the existing temples?

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXV, p. 397.
[2] *Antyajas*

The "higher" castes have not left them much capacity for such enterprise. It is the wrong way of looking at the question to say that they interfere with our temples. We, the so-called higher caste men, have to do our duty by admitting them to the temples common to all Hindus.

6. Are you an advocate of communal representation, and do you hold that the untouchables must have representation in all administrative bodies?

I am not. But if the untouchables are purposely shut out by the influential classes, it would be an improper exclusion barring the road to swaraj. My disapproval of communal representation does not mean exclusion of any community from representation but, on the contrary, it lays the burden on the represented communities to see to the proper representation of the unrepresented or inadequately represented communities.

7. Are you a believer in the efficacy of *varnashrama dharma*?

Yes. But there is today a travesty of *varna*, no trace of *ashram* and a misrepresentation of dharma. The whole system needs to be revised and brought in unison with the latest discoveries in the field of religion.

8. Don't you believe that India is *Karmabhumi*, and that everybody born here is endowed with wealth and intelligence, social status and religious aspirations according to his good or ill deeds in his previous birth?

Not in the sense the correspondent means. For everybody everywhere reaps as he sows. But India is essentially *karmabhumi* (land of duty) in contradistinction to *bhogabhumi* (land of enjoyment).

9. Is not education and reform among the untouchables a primary condition to be fulfilled ere one can begin to talk of the removal of untouchability?

There can be no reform or education among the untouchables without the removal of untouchability.

10. Is it not natural, and just as it should be, that non-drunkards avoid drunkards, and that vegetarians avoid non-vegetarians?

Not necessarily. A teetotaller would regard it as his duty to associate with his drunkard brother for the purpose of weaning him from the evil habit. So may a vegetarian seek out a non-vegetarian.

11. Is it not true that a pure man (in the sense that he is a teetotaller, and vegetarian) easily becomes an impure man (in the sense that he becomes a drunkard, and non-vegetarian) when he is made to mingle with men who drink, and kill, and eat animals?

A man who being unconscious of the wrong, drinks wine and eats flesh foods, is not necessarily an impure man. But I can understand the possibility of evil resulting from one being made to mingle with a corrupt person. In our case, however, there is no case of *making* anyone associate with untouchables.

12. Is it not owing to the above fact that a certain class of orthodox Brahmins do not mingle with the other castes (including the untouchables), but constitute themselves into a separate class, and live together for their spiritual uplift?

It must be a poor spirituality that requires to be locked up in a safe. Moreover, days are gone when men used to guard their virtue by permanent isolation.

13. Would you not be interfering with the religions and caste-system (*varnashrama dharma*) of India, whatever may be the bad or good points of the above systems and religions, if you advocate the removal of untouchability?

How do I interfere with anything or anybody by mere advocacy of a reform? Interference there would be, if I were to advocate removal of untouchability by the use of force against those who retain untouchability.

14. Would you not be guilty of doing *himsa*[1] to the orthodox Brahmins, if you interfere with their religious beliefs without convincing them in the first instance?

I cannot be guilty of *himsa* to the orthodox Brahmins as I do not interfere with their religious belief except through conviction.

15. Are not the Brahmins guilty of untouchability, when they do not touch, dine with or marry the various other castes leaving alone the untouchables?

Brahmins are guilty of the sin if they refuse to "touch" the other castes.

16. Does it satisfy the hunger of the untouchable when he is made to parade Brahmin *agraharams*[2] in the exercise of his right as a man?

Man does not live by bread alone. Many prefer self-respect to food.

17. Does not satyagraha in this direction lead to violence, seeing that the untouchables are not so well educated as to understand the full doctrine of non-violent non-co-operation, and also seeing that the Brahmin cares more for his religion than for politics?

If reference is to Vykom, experience shows that the "untouchable" has shown amazing self-restraint. The latter part of the

[1] Violence

[2] Streets occupied by Brahmins

question suggests the possibility of violence by the Brahmins concerned. I should be sorry if *they* resort to violence. They would then have shown, in my opinion, not regard for religion but ignorance of and contempt for religion.

18. Do you advocate that all should become equal, without any distinction of caste, race, creed or avocation?

Such should be the case in the eye of the law in the matter of elementary human rights, even as, irrespective of caste, race, creed or colour, we have certain things in common, e.g., hunger, thirst, etc.

19. Would that supreme philosophical truth be of any use in the field of practical politics, to the average *grihastha* or householder, seeing that only great souls, who have come to the end of their cycle of karma, could realize and practise that supreme philosophical truth, and not the ordinary *grihastha*, who has only to follow what the *rishis*[1] have ordained, and in that following, get discipline which consequently leads to release from birth and death?

Not much "supreme philosophical truth" is involved in the recognition of the simple truth that no human being is to be regarded as untouchable by reason of his birth. The truth is so simple that it is recognized all over the world except by orthodox Hindus. I have questioned the statement that the *rishis* taught the doctrine of untouchability as we practise it.

Young India, 5-2-1925

33. ON ANOTHER'S LAND

A friend says:

You ask us at every turn to yield to Mussalmans, you ask us not to resort to law-courts on any account. Have you fully considered the consequences of what you are saying? Have you taken into account human nature? What are we to do when mosques are being put up on our ground without our permission? What are we to do when unscrupulous men bring suits against us for monies we do not owe or when they actually rob us of our possessions. In giving your answers you must take our poor selves into consideration. You dare not say you do not know us. Or if you give your *fatwas*[2] in utter obliviousness of us, you must not blame us if we do not respond to your counsels of perfection. Let me tell you that you are sometimes impossible.

[1] Sages

[2] Decrees of Muslim divines

I sympathize with the friends who talk to me in this strain. I am prepared to recognize the limitations of human nature for the very simple reason that I recognize my own. But precisely as recognizing my own limitations, I do not deceive myself by refusing to distinguish between what I ought to do and what I fail to do. I must not deceive others by refusing to notice the same distinction and telling them that what they propose to do is not only perhaps defensible but also right. Many things are impossible and yet are the only things right. A reformer's business is to make the impossible possible by giving an ocular demonstration of the possibility in his own conduct. Whoever thought it possible before Edison to speak to people hundreds of miles away from us? Marconi went a step further and made wireless communication possible. We are daily witnessing the phenomenon of the impossible of yesterday becoming the possible of today. As in physical science so in psychological.

Now for the concrete questions. The question of mosques built on another's land without his permission is incredibly simple. If A is in possession of his land and someone comes to build something on it, be it even a mosque, A has the right at the first opportunity of pulling down the structure. Any building of the shape of a mosque is not a mosque. A building to be a mosque must be duly consecrated. A building put up on another's land without his permission is a pure robbery. Robbery cannot be consecrated. If A has not the will or the capacity to destroy the building miscalled mosque, he has the right of going to a law-court to have the building pulled down. Law-courts are forbidden to convinced non-co-operators but not to those who require such conviction. Moreover, full non-co-operation we have never practised. A practice has a flaw in it when it is not only inconvenient but clearly defeats the end it was designed to serve. So long as I own property I must defend it whether by the force of law-courts or by the force of my own strong arms. The act is in essence the same. Our national non-co-operation is or was with a system. It presupposed co-operation among ourselves in a general way. But when we non-co-operate among ourselves, national non-co-operation is a mirage. Individual non-co-operation is possible when we own not a clod of earth. It is possible only for *sannyasin*. The highest fulfilment of religion therefore requires a giving up of all possession. Having ascertained the law of our being, we must set about reducing it to practice to the extent of our capacity and no further. That is the middle way. When a robber comes to take away A's property he can deliver the property to him, if he re-

cognizes in him a blood brother. If he does not feel like one but dreads the robber and would wish that someone was near to knock him down, he must try to knock him down and take the consequence. If he has the desire but not the ability to fight the robber, he must allow himself to be robbed and then call in the assistance of law-courts to regain the lost property. In both the cases he has as good a chance of losing his property as of regaining it. If he is a sane man like me, he would reach with me the conclusion that to be really happy he must not own anything or own things only so long as his neighbours permit him. In the last resort we live not by our physical strength but by sufferance. Hence the necessity of uttermost humility and absolute reliance on God. This is living by soul-force. This is highest self-expression.

Let us bear the law in mind not as an academic and attractive proposition when it is written on paper but as the law of our being to be continually realized and let us fashion our practice in accordance with the law *and* the measure of our ability to live up to it.

Young India, 5-2-1925

34. WELL DONE

The Secretary, Taluka Congress Committee, Haliyal, Karwar, writes:

> Our Municipality here has a Congress majority. We are therefore trying to carry out the Congress programme through it. Spinning has been made compulsory in the municipal schools. Municipal employees have khaddar costumes given to them. Primary education of the children of depressed classes has been made free and compulsory. Their children sit side by side with other children. They are permitted to make use of the common tank. We have no Hindu-Muslim or Brahmin-non-Brahmin differences. We are organizing a temperance campaign.

This is all good and substantial work. I congratulate the Haliyal Taluka Congress Committee on its solid constructive work and wish that others will follow them.

Young India, 5-2-1925

35. *NOTES*

Towards Unity

The All-Party Committee met to consider the questions referred to it by the Conference. It appointed a sub-committee of nearly fifty to consider the question. The sub-committee appointed a smaller committee to consider all possible swaraj schemes and report to the sub-committee the results of its deliberations. Dr. Besant is labouring at this smaller committee with her usual application and energy which put to shame younger men and women. But naturally the attention centred round the Hindu-Muslim problem; not that it is intrinsically more important except for individuals like me but because it blocks all progress towards swaraj. The sub-committee proved too formal for the task. It was necessary to avoid the reserve and the stiffness even of a committee and to be absolutely informal and to have a still smaller number of persons. This was done and a few of each community met at Hakim Saheb's house. The result has been succinctly given to the Press by Pandit Motilalji Nehru. I agree that there is no cause for anxiety or disappointment. For all want a solution. Some want it at once, some regard the time not to be seasonable, some would sacrifice everything to get a solution, others would be cautious and would wait till they have secured what to them is an indispensable minimum. But all agreed that a solution of the problem was essential to swaraj. And as all want swaraj, a solution must not be beyond the reach of those who are engaged in finding it. The prospect was never so bright as when we parted to meet again on 28th February. Meanwhile everyone is to explore fresh avenues to a settlement.

The public will want to know my view of communal representation. I am opposed to it with all my heart but I would agree to anything so long as it ensures peace and is honourable to both the parties. In the absence of agreement on the plans suggested by either party I have presented a solution which might answer the purpose. But I need not discuss it at the present stage. I hope that the responsible members of both the communities will leave no stone unturned whether by means of private, quiet talks or by means of a public expression of their opinions. I hope too that newspapermen will write nothing to irritate any party but will observe discreet silence where they cannot usefully ssist.

Indians in South Africa

The Viceregal answer to the Deputation that waited on His Excellency was sympathetic but non-committal. It betrays unnecessary consideration for the difficulties of the Union Government. It is just for one Government to appreciate the difficulties of another but the performance might easily be overdone. The Union Government observed no delicacy when it had to make its choice. The Indian Government has had many an occasion to make such a choice. Each time, except once, it has surrendered. The exception was made by Lord Hardinge[1] who hurled defiance at the Government of South Africa and ranged himself on the side of Indians in South Africa. There were reasons for it. The Indians were fighting by direct action. The method was new. They had proved their capacity for resistance and suffering and yet they were demonstrably and wholly non-violent. But at the present moment Indians of South Africa are leaderless. With Sorabji[2], Kachalia[3], P. K. Naidu[4] and now Rustomji gone, they do not know what they should do or can do. There is ample scope for non-violent action. But it requires thinking out and vigorous working out. That seems hardly possible at the present moment. I have, however, great hope of one or two young men who are resident in South Africa. Not the least among them is Sorabji, the brave son of the brave Rustomji. Young Sorabji is himself a seasoned soldier in satyagraha. He has been to prison. He organized the wonderful receptions that were given in Natal to Sarojini Devi[5]. Let our countrymen in South Africa realize that they must work out their own salvation. Even heaven helps only those who help themselves. They will find that if they show their original grit and spirit and sacrifice, they will have the people of India, the Government of India and the world helping and fighting for them.

There is a passage in the Viceregal pronouncement which needs supplementing. His Excellency says,

> It is stated in your address that "the Municipal Franchise was solemnly assured to Indians by the Natal Government when in 1896 Indians were deprived of the Parliamentary Franchise." But you have not indicated

[1] Viceroy of India, 1910-16

[2] Sorabji Shapurji Adajania; Parsi public worker and passive resister who suffered imprisonment and deportation during the satyagraha campaign in South Africa

[3] A. M. Cachalia, Chairman, Transvaal British Indian Association

[4] Secretary of the British Indian Association, Transvaal

[5] Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949), poet, patriot, congress leader and a close associate of Gandhiji. She visited South Africa in 1924.

the exact source or the nature of the assurance. My Government are making the necessary enquiries to verify the position.

The statement made by the Deputation is substantially correct. It was, however, not in 1896 but probably in 1894 that the assurance was given. I am writing from memory. The facts are these. It was in 1894 that the first disfranchising bill was passed by the Natal Assembly. Whilst it was passing through that assembly a petition[1] was presented to it on behalf of Indians wherein it was stated that the Indians enjoyed in India the Municipal and indirectly even the political franchise. Fear was also expressed that the deprivation of the political franchise was likely to be a prelude to that of the Municipal Franchise. It was in answer to this petition that the late Sir John Robinson, the Premier of Natal, and the late Mr. Escombe, the Attorney General, gave the assurance that there was no intention to go further and deprive the Indians of the Municipal Franchise at a future date. The disfranchising bill was disallowed by the superior Government but another non-racial in character was passed. The assurance referred to by me was several times repeated by Mr. Escombe who had charge of all the bills and who was virtually the dictator of Natal's policy whilst he was in office.

Is a Swarajist a Congressman?

I have before me a curious letter in which the writer says, a distinction is being made by Congressmen in Sind between Swarajists and Congressmen, and the former are obstructed by the latter. I should have hoped that such a thing would be impossible after the Belgaum Congress which recognizes the Swaraj Party as an integral party of the Congress and which suspends the non-co-operation programme. Every Swarajist who subscribes to the Congress creed and conforms to the new franchise is as much a Congressman as the one who is not a Swarajist, that is to say, who does not believe in Council-entry. Let it be also remembered that the Swaraj Party has itself altered its constitution to make it obligatory on every member of that party to accept the Congress franchise. There should therefore not only be no obstruction by one of the other but each should help the other wherever the help is not inconsistent with one's conscience.

From Vykom

The following from the Satyagraha Ashram at Vykom cannot fail to be of general interest.

[1] *Vide* Vol. I, pp. 92-6.

I hope you have got our telegram about the spinning competition. Two volunteers took 578 yards and 508 yds., each yarn being of 8 counts. Our weaving is not up to the mark now since some of the boys who knew weaving have left the Ashram on leave. We have, according to the directions of Vinobaji[1], reduced our number to barely fifty. But this has proved troublesome since the climate here is very bad and many of the resident volunteers become incapacitated to offer satyagraha for six hours. So it has become necessary to go in for some ten to fifteen volunteers more, so that we have to keep a permanent strength of 60 volunteers. I hope you will agree that this is necessary.

Of the 24 hours 8 hours for sleep, 6 hours for satyagraha, 2 hours for spinning, 1 hour for Hindi, 2 hours for Ashram work (sweeping, washing, etc.), 2 hours for meals, bath, and other bodily wants, 1 hour for reading-room and 2 hours for daily prayer and meetings in which usually some good subjects are dealt with either by me or by some of the prominent guests who usually attend the Ashram.

Our treasurer is now exerting himself for building a school in memory of the satyagraha campaign under orders from Sri Narayana Guru[2]. All of us are anxiously waiting for your coming here. It has become almost an obsession with most people here to consider what they should do to expedite your coming. I hope that God will grant you the health and time to proceed here shortly.

The scrupulous care with which things are being managed by the Vykom satyagrahis is the surest assurance of success. It may seemingly take long, but it is my deliberate conviction that it is none the less the quickest way. It is the only true way. The fight against untouchability is a religious fight. It is a fight for the recognition of human dignity. It is a fight for a mighty reform in Hinduism. It is a fight against the entrenched citadels of orthodoxy. Victory which is a certainty is worth the patience and the sacrifice, the band of devoted young Hindus is giving to it. The process of waiting is a process of self-purification for the young men engaged in the fight. If they persist they will be ranked among the makers of India of the future.

As for the satyagrahis longing that I should go to Vykom I can only give them the assurance that I am longing to be with them. I am looking for a chance. But the choice becomes difficult when there are so many calls upon my time. My heart

[1] Acharya Vinoba Bhave (b. 1895); Gandhiji's greatest disciple; founder, Bhoodan and Gramdan movements; author of *Talks on the Gita*, etc.

[2] Spiritual leader of the untouchables

and my prayers are with them; who knows that they are not more than my bodily presence in their midst.

BEWARE

The Ganjam District Congress Committee has sent me a post-card from a dealer asking for quotations for hanks of 2,000 yards of yarn for the purpose of sale on the market. It is not possible to object to such an open trade. But those who do not want to spin but want to buy yarn and to give it as their subscription, should beware of buying yarn in the bazaar. They should try to get their quota spun in their own families. If that be not possible they should engage a reliable spinner and get him to supply the yarn. The Akola Congressmen who do not want to spin themselves have solved their difficulty by getting Mr. Mashruwala[1] who is an enthusiastic believer in hand-spinning to supply them with the required quantity. This ensures the kind and the quality of yarn. No province should import hand-spun yarn from another province.

WASTE OF YARN

A friend from Kumbakonam writes:

> Perhaps you are aware of a custom, now prevalent in the country, to honour political leaders with hand-spun yarn garlands. Such garlands are invariably used on every political occasion and I may add that an enormous quantity of hand-spun yarn is wasted since none takes care of it. As an example of such waste, I have sent per separate post, a parcel of yarn which I was able to pick up at the Tamil Nadu Khilafat Conference held recently at Kumbakonam under the Presidency of Maulana Shaukat Ali[2]. But for my interest in the yarn 960 yards of yarn would have gone to waste. I am sure that at the said Conference alone, much larger quantity of yarn had been wasted. Hence I would like to suggest to you to instruct our countrymen through *Young India* to prepare garlands in hanks of uniform length, say 2,000 yards, so that at every meeting garlands of 2,000 yards may be collected and utilized according as the garlanded leaders propose.

I can endorse the correspondent's complaint as to waste. It is a good custom to present leaders with yarn garlands but they should be prettily made and not much yarn should be used in them.

[1] Kishorelal Mashruwala; constructive worker and associate of Gandhiji; editor of Gandhiji's weekly, *Harijan*, author of *Gandhi and Marx*

[2] 1873-1938; Muslim politician who along with his brother Mahomed Ali took a leading part in the Khilafat movement

If the idea be to present yarn to leaders and not to garland them, the correspondent's suggestion should be adopted and uniform size hanks should be given. For, if the habit of presenting yarn garlands becomes universal and care is not taken, there might be an enormous waste of good yarn which might otherwise have been utilized for making cheap khaddar for poor people.

"Habitual Wearing"

A Bengal school teacher writes:

I am a teacher of a national school. The resolution about national schools passed at Belgaum has given rise to considerable stir amongst the teachers and students of national schools. Some are trying to interpret the resolution as it suits their own interest. The words "habitual wearing of khaddar by students" is being interpreted by some as not meaning compulsory wearing and hence they say that those, who are attending school without khadi on, need not be debarred. All that the teachers should do is always to ask them to put on khadi and gradually initiate them into wearing it. They say, even if they have to wait indefinitely to see their students clad in khadi they can continue calling their institutions "national" without transgressing the resolution of Belgaum. They say, even if 60 p.c. of the students come to school with mill cloth they can claim to call their schools national if only the school teachers continued teaching the utility and propriety of using khaddar, hoping that they would take to it in due course which may be six months, one year or even more.

In our opinion the resolution does not admit of this interpretation. It means that the schools should not tolerate anybody's coming to school without khaddar but in cases of emergency or helplessness resulting from unavoidable causes over which one has no control a student may be allowed to join school on rare occasions. We think the resolution debars everybody from attending who systematically comes to school without khaddar. We have been trying to run the institutions in our area on this line.

I therefore appeal to you to write to me, and in the pages of *Young India* if you think it necessary, the real meaning and sense of the resolution in clear unequivocal language so that your idea about the point may be known to all concerned.

I have no doubt about the meaning of the word "habitual". My correspondent's meaning is the only possible meaning. A school cannot be called national, in terms of the Congress resolution, whose scholars do not wear khaddar as a rule. But in seeking to know the meaning of words, the safest rule is "go to the

dictionary". Here is the meaning given in the Concise Oxford Dictionary of the word "habitual": "customary, constant, continual".

SHOULD THEY AFFILIATE

The question then arises: are the schools which cannot fulfil the test then to become affiliated as Government institutions? Surely such is not the only alternative or for that matter any, for a school that has non-co-operated. There is room enough for schools independent both of the Congress and the Government. There may be schools whose conductors do not believe in Government patronage, control or interference and yet may not believe for instance in khadi or in teaching the vernacular or Hindustani. There is no reason why such schools should not continue if they receive public support or the conductors are themselves rich enough to carry them on themselves. All that the Congress has done is to prescribe the limits within which it can recognize or support educational institutions. And what can be more natural than that the Congress should insist on Congress institutions conforming to conditions which in the opinion of Congressmen promote the interest of the country?

TILAK MAHARASHTRA UNIVERSITY

Mr. Gharpure, the Registrar of the Tilak Maharashtra University, writes:

> Many friends and colleagues have drawn my attention to a sentence in your presidential address on page 25, last two lines. "Many provinces have their national schools and colleges. *Gujarat alone* has a *National University* maintained at an annual cost of Rs. 1,00,000/- and having control of three colleges and 70 schools with 9,000 pupils."
>
> This gives rise to a misunderstanding. You are right if you mean that no other Province has a University maintained at an annual cost of one lakh. But people are liable to interpret it in another way, viz., that no other Province has a University. The cost is regarded only as an adjectival clause.
>
> I shall be glad if you will be kind enough to remove this misunderstanding through the pages of *Young India* as early as you can.
>
> The Tilak Maharashtra University is maintained at an annual cost of Rs. 6,000, with three colleges, 30 schools and 2,000 students. The annual cost is less simply because each college and school takes care of its own self and no charges are made to the University.
>
> The National Medical College is not yet recognized though it is on the way to it. Still the Tilak Mahavidyalaya maintains 75 students with an annual cost of Rs. 15,000.

I had thought that I knew English fairly well and that read in its context the sentence, referred to by Mr. Gharpure, was capable of bearing only one meaning, i.e., that not to mention the other provinces, Gujarat alone underwent so much expense and trained so many scholars. But I see that friends at least as conversant with English as myself have put a different construction upon the sentence. My only consolation is that both they and I are judging the meaning of a sentence written in a language foreign to us. I therefore derive the very poor consolation from the thought that they are as likely to be wrong in their interpretation as I in mine. But I can give them the assurance that I used Gujarat as merely an illustration and I mention Gujarat rather than any other province because I had the figures relating to Gujarat at hand. The emphasis was not meant for the University as distinguished from schools and colleges. I was aware at the time of writing my address, not only of the Gujarat National University but also of the Muslim National University at Aligarh and the Punjab National University at Lahore and the Bihar National University at Patna and the Kashi Vidyapith at Banaras besides the Tilak Maharashtra University. I do not know the expenses of the Punjab and the Bihar Universities and the Kashi Vidyapith. But I know that the Muslim University cost last year nearly Rs. 75,000.

VOLUNTEERS

I have been asked to give my impressions of the volunteers' work at Belgaum during the Congress week. I thought that I had already dealt with it in my Belgaum impressions. But I gladly respond. Their work will bear a fuller and separate treatment. In my opinion the volunteers reached at Belgaum comparatively the highest watermark in efficiency within my experience of four Congresses. They were hardworking, efficient and willing. I heard no complaint from the delegates about them. Physically too they appeared to me to be fit. Dr. Hardikar[1] was good enough to take me through their camp which had a businesslike appearance and was fairly tidy. I say fairly tidy for in my opinion a volunteer camp must be a model of tidiness, not a thing being out of its place and everything being not only in its own place but being in its place in a neat manner. For instance, a volunteer may have his bedding in its place and yet may have put it in a heap instead of having properly and neatly folded it in the prescribed manner.

[1] Organizer of the Hindustani Seva Dal which later became volunteer organization of the Congress

In point of sanitation too a volunteer camp must be perfect, not a scrap of paper or dirt should be found anywhere. I understand that Dr. Hardikar specially restricted the number of volunteers. They had therefore more than a fair share of work to do. During the time that the Congress was in session they had to work over sixteen hours per day, being on their legs practically the whole of that time. I must not omit to mention the lady volunteers. They were most helpful and attentive. They too had undergone previous training. Though we cannot manage a Congress session without the efficient help of volunteers, let me say that that work is the least part of a volunteer's training. Volunteers must be our greatest asset in winning swaraj. This they can only be, if in addition to having a spotless character and the necessary training in drilling, sanitation and first aid to the injured, they know how to organize the nation for swaraj. For this purpose therefore every volunteer must be an expert carder and spinner, and must be able in addition to doing his share of spinning, necessary for the franchise, to organize carding and spinning in his own district. It should be remembered that hand-spinning has been part of a volunteer's training since 1921.

STRIKING, IF TRUE

A correspondent writes severely criticizing the cry of Mussalman deficiency in the matter of education and says that I am being deceived. In order to enlighten me he has sent me some striking figures showing the proportion of literates among the two communities. I reproduce them below.

Province	Mussalmans per thousand	Hindus per thousand
MEN		
Burma	302	288
Central Provinces and Berar	225	89
Madras	201	170
U.P.	73	71
Baroda	309	234
C.P.	169	59
Mysore	238	133
Sikkim	833	91
Gwalior	142	60
Hyderabad	140	47
Rajputana	66	57

WOMEN

Burma	87	86
Delhi	31	26
C.P. and Berar	27	8
Ajmer, Marwar	18	16
Bihar	8	6
U.P.	8	6
Mysore	62	16
Baroda	48	42
Hyderabad	35	4
Gwalior	26	6
C.I.	19	4
Rajputana	9	3

I must confess that I did not know that the figures were so favourable to the Mussalmans. Nevertheless my statement stands. The real rivalry is not between the rank and file—the merely literate—but between the highly educated among both. And I suppose it is an undeniable fact that the so-called higher education is not so common among the Mussalmans as among the Hindus. I should like my correspondent to examine the figures as to higher education and say whether I am not right. Meanwhile let the students of statistics analyse the returns reproduced above and inform me of any inaccuracy in them. I have taken it for granted that the absence of figures for the provinces not mentioned by the correspondent shows that the figures in respect of them were not favourable to the charge brought by him. So far as literacy among women is concerned, I am glad to find that the percentage among Mussalman sisters in so many provinces is higher than among Hindu women. It shows that the *purdah* is no bar to literacy. This is no defence of the *purdah* for I am totally opposed to it. I note the fact as a pleasant surprise. For whilst I knew that many Mussalman sisters though remaining in seclusion were learned, I did not know that literacy among them was higher than among Hindu sisters.

SEASONABLE FIGURES

Whilst the Hindu-Muslim question is occupying the attention of the country, the readers will appreciate the following table[1] prepared by a friend and giving the percentage of population according to religion in India as a whole and also in the various provinces. The figures have been taken from the census of 1921.

Young India, 5-2-1925

[1] Not reproduced here

36. TELEGRAM TO SURENDRANATH BISWAS

February 5, 1925

SURENDRANATH BISWAS[1]
16 A GOVINDGOSHEL[2] LANE
CALCUTTA

IMPOSSIBLE FIX TIME BEFORE BEGINNING NEXT MONTH. SUGGEST YOUR FIXING DATE[3] WITHOUT REFERENCE ME.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

37. SPEECH AT RAWALPINDI[4]

February 5, 1925

I was present here last December and held some talks with you.[5] At that time I assured you that if you all had not returned to Kohat, I would come back and would talk to you; and if some Muslim brothers came by then from Kohat, I would make some inquiries also.

Some Muslim brothers have come from Kohat and I am talking things over with them. As a result of these discussions I am in no position to advise you to go back to Kohat. I was hoping that by holding talks with them something good might turn up. I am not without hope but today I do not have a single reason for asking you to return to Kohat. In fact I feel like advising you to the contrary. It is possible that I may not succeed in my task with the Muslim brethren. Moreover those Muslims who have got a hold over Kohat have not come here. On the other hand they have sent a telegram saying, "A compromise has already been reached here and the Hindus are returning to Kohat. Why do you call us then? Why do you again throw all people into panic?

[1] Chairman, Reception Committee, Bengal Provincial Conference

[2] Govind Ghosal

[3] Presumably for the Bengal Provincial Conference; *vide* Vol. XXV, p. 586.

[4] Addressed to Hindus who had left Kohat owing to Hindu-Muslim riots there in September 1924

[5] *Vide* Vol. XXV, pp. 414-6.

The implication is that Shaukat Ali and myself should not interfere in this matter. But while talking to the Muslims who have come here I asked them, "Do you take the responsibility of taking Hindus to Kohat?" One of the gentlemen frankly replied, "If the Hindus want to return to Kohat, let them do so but we can take no responsibility. We are not even in a position to invite them, the reason being that those who are there at present are hated." So I cannot advise you to go back to Kohat.

There is yet another matter. If you want to return there relying on the strength of the Government and if the talks with the Government have inspired some faith in you, you are free to go back. But even now I hold firm to the belief that we are not going to benefit by working with or through the Government. And therefore I do not advise you to go there under the protection of the Government. Wherever you stay, you have to rely on your own strength.

If there is need for holding talks with anyone before returning to Kohat it is with the Muslims. In the first place their number is large. Even if they were equal in number, it would not be good to return without holding talks with them since we have run away from there in fear. It is a different thing if someone goes there and sacrifices one's honour for the sake of money or for saving one's life. To me it is not a life worth living, it is veritable death.

I learnt something very distressing yesterday, namely, that many among you embraced Islam to save your lives and then you came here. In my view such people have not truly embraced Islam but have done so under fear and in order to save their lives. If it were not so why should they say, "Cut off my tuft" or "Make me read the *Kalama*[1]"? If we do so the *Gayatri* would have no meaning and our Hinduism too would be deemed meaningless. This is true of Sikhs and Arya Samajists as well. What I mean to say is that we should be prepared to lose our lives but not to change our faith. Our true wealth is not money, land or gold. They can be pillaged. But our true wealth is religion. When we abandon that we can be said to have pillaged our own homes. Ever since I heard these things I feel there is nothing to be gained in your going and staying there. You are losing much through love of wealth and life.

Sometimes Muslims kidnap a woman and make her embrace Islam. I do not understand how, in this manner, she can become a Muslim. She does not know the Koran. She does not know the

[1] The credo of Islam

Kalama. Alas, she knows very little even of her own religion. I cannot understand how she can become a Muslim. If someone abducts my wife and she reads the *Kalama,* then I can no more live in this world. Either I would seek your help [in defending her] or beg you to take her back into the Hindu fold. I would be a coward if I did not act in this manner. I cannot claim to be her husband. If you are men and wish to live like men, then make a solemn declaration that as long as conditions do not change, you will not return to Kohat.

I am told that if Kohat Hindus do not return, other Hindus also may well flee from the Frontier Province. I think it would be right if that happened. I ask you to live there in your own strength or in friendship with Muslims. I do not wish that Hindus should become cowards. I wish to make both Hindus and Muslims brave. I want that they should grow together in strength. I cannot bear it if Hindus grow in strength by destroying Muslims or the other way about. Hinduism does not teach us to destroy other religions.

I could not swallow that argument yesterday about the possibility of a Hindu woman being converted to Islam. I wish to have this point further clarified by Muslim friends—does Islam teach them to abduct my wife? My wife might not even know what Islam and Christianity are about. She was born in a Hindu family, she chants the name of Rama, and reads the *Ramayana* and *Bhagavata*[1]. She cannot use her intellect in embracing Islam. She continues to stick to her own dharma and that too with complete faith. What should one make of it if someone comes and tells one that such a woman has embraced Islam? She has not embraced Islam in full knowledge and therefore she is not prepared to regard herself as a Muslim. I want to ask Muslim friends: Does their religion teach them to abduct anyone's wife and make her a Muslim? It is unbearable for me if any woman living in the Frontier Province is forcibly violated. If it is argued that she has embraced Islam, I am not prepared to believe it. That is why I want to tell you that if you hold your religion dear, then do not go back as long as Muslims there do not say, "Come back with honour"; you should not go till then. If you go back you might make money but if you forsake your dharma and live there, that life is not worth living.

So far you have not died of hunger. In December I told you that I couldn't bear any able-bodied man living by alms, i.e., by

[1] A poem dealing with the avatars of Vishnu

begging for food. If I advise you to do that, I would be doing a wrong thing. Even today I am firm in this. That is why I have not asked for a single pie for Kohat. I would collect funds only when I know the purpose for which they are collected. I have made no list. It is true that if someone has sent something to me [for the relief of Kohat Hindus], I redirect that there. But if you act on my advice and those who are able-bodied live on their own labour, I pledge you my full help.

I am even prepared to take you to Sabarmati. There I shall give you whatever you need as food and shelter. I shall share my food with you. First I shall see you eat and then eat myself. But I will take full eight hours' work daily. If you intend to do manual labour, I am prepared to help you in every way. But if some of you say "we are lawyers and get us a practice", that I can't do. I can't get you a brief by getting two persons to quarrel. Similarly if some businessmen demand rupees ten or twenty lakhs or ten thousand, I certainly can't give them that. I can only provide you some kind of work. With this end in view I tell the people of India that everyone should ply the charkha at least for an hour daily. The charkha is a symbol of labour. One who plies the charkha can do other work also. I can't offer you work on land. But there is plenty of work by way of spinning, ginning and weaving from which lakhs [of people] can earn their livelihood. I read in the newspapers that the Maharaja of Mysore has also started spinning on the charkha. If those among you who are artisans want implements for their vocation, such as goldsmiths' implements,—it will be my job to provide them. It is my duty to make arrangements for each man to pursue his vocation. I am prepared to beg on their behalf. So I ask you again to prepare lists from which we can know how many can pursue a particular vocation and how many members of their families can work and what kind of work they can do. Even a sick or infirm person can do some work. I get work out of my widowed sister and only then do I feed her. She says, "we are children of a Diwan", but I do not believe in these [distinctions]. We are only labourers in the service of India; so I cannot but exact work from those whom I feed. I keep a clear account with my sister and wife and so I shall even with a widow.

There is something I have heard and which has pained me. I have heard that some of the Kohat Hindus gamble; some, having taken their ration once, ask for it again and make a row if they do not get it; if they have one quilt they ask for a second and make money by selling it. This distresses me much. I can

bear what has happened in Kohat but if these things are true I cannot bear that. If you want to live like this then you may return to Kohat and drown your religion. In my view religion does not mean that one becomes a Hindu simply because one reads the *Gayatri*. According to me, he alone is a Hindu in whose heart the *Gayatri* is inscribed. A man does not become a Sikh by merely reciting the *Granth Sahib*. He alone is a true Sikh who cherishes the *Granth Sahib* in his heart with genuine pride. One does not become an Arya Samajist because one chants Vedic *mantras* well. But one who shapes his life in accordance with those *mantras* is a true Arya Samajist. I will ask Muslims also whether I become a Muslim because I read the *Kalama*. Thus, ever since I have heard this about you I have been greatly perturbed.

This is *Kaliyuga*[1] and only because of such incidents are we in a fallen state. I request you not to put me to shame by behaving in such manner. If you want to act in this way then keep me away from you, because I would not be fit for your service.

Malaviyaji[2] agrees with me that you should not go to Kohat in this kind of atmosphere. I would not put him to the trouble of coming here, because in the Central Assembly a decision is being taken on the Bengal Ordinance and he is busy there. He was ready to come here but I told him that I would not trouble him this time. Lalaji also arrived here today. He had telephoned from Lahore. I invited him here but unfortunately he fell ill and could not be with us today. I gave him the trouble of coming here—Rawalpindi—because if we two are not of one mind, then you would be deceived. We three hold the same opinion. They do not know what I told you about Islam. But in view of what has happened in Kohat, they have come to the identical view that it would be wrong for you to return under the existing conditions. What I said over and above that was that without effecting a settlement with the Muslims it would be wrong for you to return.

I do not even wish that the free food being given to you now should be continued. It is written in the *Gita* that he who eats without performing *yajna*[3] is in fact a thief. *Yajna* has many meanings and physical labour is one of them. So it is a sin to eat without labour. I have come to talk things over with you. If you

[1] The age of strife

[2] Madan Mohan Malaviya (1861-1946); founder of the Benares Hindu University; twice President of the Indian National Congress

[3] Sacrifice

want to know anything else, you can question me. I want that you should tell those working here to make a list of persons having food here and also tell them that whatever you take from here, you would return through your labour. You must find some work for yourselves. If you come to Sabarmati with me I am prepared to give you some work. I feel like staying here with you and doing some manual work. At present, I have also other work to do. That is why I cannot stay with you. Sit down together, all of you, and think it over. If my proposal is acceptable to you, then rent a house, set up a loom and start work. I am prepared to get funds for that. There is nothing to be ashamed of in asking me for money for this purpose.

I have thus made the request I had wanted to. I am ready to reply to your questions. Let me also know if what I have heard about you is wrong. To those who have given you shelter you owe a duty and that is to take up some work for yourselves.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 126-32

38. EXAMINATION OF KAMAL JAILANE ON KOHAT RIOTS[1]

[RAWALPINDI]
February 6, 1925

Q. Do you live near Kohat?

A. I live quite close by.

Q. Are you a zamindar?

A. I am a zamindar. I own several villages in. . . .[2] Besides these our ancestors were given shares in lands in almost all the villages (here).

Q. Are you on good terms with the Hindus?

A. I can confidently claim that my relations with the Hindus are very good.

Q. Do you ever live in Kohat itself?

A. I come and go to and from that place daily, as my dwelling place is only 500 yards away from it.

[1] Referring to the examinations of Kamal Jailane and Ahmad Gul, Gandhiji is reported to have remarked: "Today, I have done one of the most valuable jobs during the year. . . . I have undertaken such cross-examination after many years. This time, it seems, I have exhausted all my skill in cross-examination. The witnesses never realized that they were being cross-examined." *Mahadevbhaini Diary*, Vol. VII, p. 133

[2] The source has a blank here.

Q. What do you think is the cause of the disturbance between the Hindus and Mussalmans?

A. I think it was due to several causes that existed already. The pamphlet[1] affair proved to be the last drop. It occasioned the outbreak, but the hearts of the parties had been poisoned already.

Q. Will you please briefly explain yourself on this point?

A. For the last few years the Hindus have been persecuting such persons as became converts to Islam, by starting law-suits against them, thus giving vent to their resentment.

Q. Since when?

A. The practice commenced some four or five years ago and some recent instances are: (1) a photographer's wife in Kohat, a Hindu woman in Tal, and a Hindu in Bhago, who were converted to Islam. (2) Then there was a case of a Hindu embracing Islam, or becoming a Sheikh and marrying a Mussalman woman, his subsequent reconversion to Hinduism, and institution of a law-suit in connection with the woman. (3) The filing of a suit by the Mussalmans in connection with a Mussalman girl, their failure to obtain the desired sentence against the accused, the whole thing being followed by (a campaign of) litigation (against each other). (4) The securing by the Mussalmans of more than their due share of representation in social and political life and the starting of some Hindu organizations by some Hindu young men, etc. (are some other causes.)

Q. Is this (the last thing) also four or five years old?

A. It happened within the last four or five years.

Q. Before the Khilafat movement or after?

A. It commenced a year after the inauguration of the Khilafat movement.

Q. Are conversions to Islam very frequent in Kohat district?

A. Yes. There is a very large number of conversions in the district.

Q. What would be their approximate number?

A. Some conversion does take place in every *Juma*[2] mosque. The total number of these conversions comes up to about one hundred or one hundred fifty every year, though all the cases do not necessarily belong to Kohat proper. On every Friday there are one or two cases of conversion.

Q. Are all the persons converted Hindus?

A. They are all Hindus. Sometimes they are Sikhs also.

[1] Published by Jivandas, Secretary of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha of Kohat. It contained a poem with some objectionable references to Islam.

[2] Friday

Q. Did anything else also happen before this, besides the pamphlet incident?

A. There were some minor incidents relating to tanks, etc., but nothing happened affecting any large number of people except the incidents mentioned already. The affairs relating to the tanks, etc., were of a very restricted nature, but they gathered head and permeated the public outside.

Q. Did the interference of the Hindus, in the matter of conversions, cause any resentment among the Mussalmans?

A. Yes, it did cause resentment. There have been conversions of Hindus to Islam always, but the Hindus never took any notice of them. But Heaven knows what has happened today. They are raising a storm over it. After all, these people embrace Islam of their free will and for the love of it.

Q. Are all these people who are converted to Islam of full age?

A. In cases where the parents accompany the children, the latter are also converted. All the rest have attained maturity.

Q. Did ever any Mussalman tell the Hindus that they ought not to behave like this?

A. Yes. They (the Hindus) were told so. I myself told them. But none of those to whom I spoke was a person of distinction or otherwise taking interest in public affairs.

Q. Was this started before the *shuddhi*[1] movement or after?

A. This happened after the *shuddhi* movement. All these instances that I have mentioned happened after the *shuddhi* and *sangathan*[2] movements were started.

Q. Do you believe that this has any bearing on the disturbances?

A. There was ill will in the hearts already. This served as an additional excuse.

Q. Is this Muslim girl to whom you have referred the same as the one mentioned in connection with Sardar Makhan Singh's son?

A. Yes. She is the same.

Q. What is your opinion about the pamphlet, what share had the general Hindu public in it?

A. The pamphlet was sent for and sold here with the knowledge of the members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha.

[1] Literally, purification; a movement of reconversion to Hindusim

[2] A movement for organizing Hindus

Q. Are many Hindus members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha?

A. I do not know their exact number.

Q. Are Hindus in general, members of this Sabha?

A. So far as I can think, there must be numerous (non-*Sanatani*) Hindus as its members. About fifteen or sixteen members, whose names are often mentioned here for their fanaticism, belong to this class.

Q. Have you read the whole of this pamphlet?

A. I have read it through.

Q. Are all the poems in this pamphlet bad?

A. The poem coming just before the objectionable poem is very good. The remaining religious poems also are good, but song No. 11 is highly objectionable and calculated to severely shock the Muslim sentiment.

Q. Were many copies of this poem sold?

A. Copies of the pamphlet were seen in the hands of quite a large number of people, both Hindus and Mussalmans. The first copy which I saw was with Maulvi Ahmad Gul[1]. The second copy was with another Mussalman.

Q. The Hindus say that not more than 30 or 35 copies were sold. Is it true?

A. Maybe it is true, but I cannot say exactly.

Q. The members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha apologized for the objectionable poem that was published. Was it not sufficient?

A. I knew nothing about the apology till the deputation[2] returned from Peshawar. Nor have I even now seen the terms of that apology. I have heard that it was deemed insufficient by the Mussalmans.

Q. Do you know in what respect it fell short?

A. I have not seen its contents, so I can say nothing.

Q. Do you know that the page containing that poem was torn out of all the copies of the pamphlet?

A. I have no knowledge of it.

Q. Do you know that the remaining copies were sent by the Sanatan Dharma Sabha to the Deputy Commissioner and were burnt there?

A. Yes. The remaining copies were sent to the court and burnt there.

[1] Khilafat Secretary

[2] The Khilafat delegation of Peshawar which tried to pacify the parties but failed

Q. Was Jivandas, the publisher of the pamphlet, arrested?

A. Yes sir.

Q. Was the arrest of Jivandas not sufficient?

A. So far as I am concerned, it was quite enough. When Jivandas was committed to custody, a promise regarding his prosecution was given and the remaining copies of the pamphlet were burnt.

Q. Did this leave any room for complaint on the part of the Mussalmans?

A. It ought not to have left any.

Q. Do you know when these copies were burnt?

A. On September 3rd 1924.

Q. Do you know also that Jivandas was let off on bail?

A. I heard that Jivandas was let off; whether on bail or otherwise I do not know.

Q. Was he sent out of Kohat and afterwards he was let off?

A. Yes.

Q. Did this make the Mussalmans indignant?

A. Yes. The release of Jivandas, after the promise made by the Mussalman Deputy Commissioner that he would be prosecuted, inflamed the Mussalmans.

Q. Was any meeting of the Mussalmans held on account of this?

A. I heard that the meeting was held on the night of September 8.

Q. Did the Mussalmans assemble in a large force and go to the Deputy Commissioner on the night of the 9th?

A. Yes Sir.

Q, Were you present at this meeting?

A. I was given no notice of it.

Q. Did you come to know the facts about it only from hearsay reports?

A. Yes Sir, I saw the crowd passing through the bazaar both on its way to and back from the Deputy Commissioner's place. I saw it near the Town Hall as I was going to the bazaar.

Q. What was the strength of the crowd?

A. There must be about 1,500 men in the crowd. There was hartal in the bazaar on September 9. The shops of the Hindus and Mussalmans were

closed. Here and there some Sikhs were standing in front of their shops, having been compelled to open their shops.

Q. When did this happen?

A. I went to the town at 9 o'clock; when I returned at 11-30, all the shops were closed.

Q. Did you see the crowd both the times, i.e., when it was going to and when it was returning from D.C.'s place?

A. I saw it both the times inside the Chhavani Darwaza[1] when it was returning and near the Town Hall when it was going out.

Q. In which direction was the crowd proceeding?

A. It was going towards the Town Hall at 9 o'clock.

Q. Did you talk to anyone from the crowd?

A. Yes. I had some talk with some persons, while I was returning from the town.

Q. What was the nature of your conversations and what replies did you receive?

A. I asked what the matter was and where they were going. They said that they were going to D.C. to ask why Jivandas had been released, and why he had betrayed his promise to them inasmuch as he had fixed the 11th as the date for the hearing of the case.

Q. Was this all the talk you had?

A. There were some other things also but they were more or less of this very nature.

Q. Did you try to prevent them from this, and did your efforts have any effect?

A. I told them that at least we (Hindus and the Mussalmans) ought not to behave like this. By quarrelling among ourselves we give the third party (the Government) chance of interfering in our affairs. But my words had no effect upon them.

Q. Have you any knowledge of the happenings on the 9th?

A. I was in my house that day. I heard that there had been firing in the bazaar as a result of which a Mohammedan had been killed and that arson was going on.

Q. Did you come to know all this from hearsay or did you see these things yourself?

A. I only heard about it but the flames and smoke could be seen and the reports of the firing could be heard.

[1] The source has "Darwaha".

Q. When you were in Kohat at about half past eleven and saw the crowd there, were any people from the villages present there?

A. No outsiders from the villages were present in the town.

Q. Were there any people from the villages in the crowd at the Town Hall?

A. About 1/3 part consisted of the villagers.

Q. Did you visit Kohat on the 10th September?

A. On the evening of the 9th I sent a man of mine to the town to fetch some things for my friends and relatives. He brought back the news that peace had been restored in the city, that losses in lives of Mussalmans were heavier than those of the Hindus and that the fire in the bazaar was going on as before.

On the 10th I motored through the school gate in my car. The Military had thrown a double cordon round the city wall. I obtained permission from the European Officer (in-charge) to enter the city. On reaching there, I found that perfect order prevailed. I saw several breaches in the city wall. As my motor reached the tahsil gate, I again heard the reports of firing. That day was an image of the doomsday (*Kayamat ka namuna*). This state of things continued from 10 o'clock to one o'clock.

Q. What do you mean by the image of the doomsday (*Kayamat ka namuna*)?

A. I mean that anybody who fell into the hands of the mob was robbed and killed,the houses of the people were set on fire. The houses of both the Hindus and Mussalmans were burnt. The opportunity was seized upon for paying off all ancient grudges. All gentlemen took shelter behind closed doors for fear of their lives.

Q. Did you return at one o'clock?

A I returned at 10.30. But I was witnessing this spectacle from the top of a hillock near my village.

Q. You said you witnessed some horrible sights on the 9th?

A. Yes, on the 9th I witnessed one or two incidents of unarmed Hindus being murdered.

Q. Where did these murders take place?

A. One of these incidents took place on the Shahi Road, i.e., Bhagi Kohat Road, the other on the Charouda side.

Q. Were these people pedestrians?

A. I afterwards learnt that one of them was proceeding in the direction of Peshawar in a motor car and that he was taken out of this car and killed. I saw the corpse lying there.

Q. Who killed him?

A. I think it was the villagers from outside, who did not live in the vicinity of Kohat, because in the same car besides the Hindu gentleman there were two other Mussalmans one of whom was a nephew of Khan Bahadur Gulli Khan who had been in Kohat as an E.A. for several years. Had these people come from Kohat or the neighbouring villages they would have recognized the nephew of the Khan Bahadur or the nephew of the Khan Bahadur would have recognized them.

Q. Who was the other Mussalman besides the Khan Bahadur's nephew?

A. The other person was a professor of the Islamia College. Besides him, there was a driver, that is to say, there were three men in the car besides the driver, one of them being a Hindu who was killed.

Q. Were the three Mussalmans who were in the car with the Hindu gentleman unable to save him?

A. These three could not save the Hindu because the assailants were so many.

Q. You mentioned another Hindu who was killed. Can you say anything about him?

A. I only saw his corpse lying in a field. I could not identify him.

Q. Could you recognize the other Hindu who was killed first?

A. As I had seen his corpse lying on the road, I inquired the facts about him on my way. I do not know how many hours his corpse had been lying there before I passed by.

Q. Did you see any temples also that were burnt?

A. After the Hindus had left for Rawalpindi I saw some portions of some temples burnt. One of these was the temple in *mandi* (market). The building adjoining it in which we sat for peace negotiations was also burnt.

Q. Did you see any burnt Gurdwara also?

A. We saw that the Gurdwara overlooking the springs was burnt. A few months ago, dispute between the Hindus and Mussalmans had arisen over this Gurdwara. The Hindus claimed it as a temple of theirs while the Sikhs contended that it was a Gurdwara and belonged to them. Some Hindu sadhus used to sit in this Gurdwara and smoke *charas* to which the Sikhs took strong objection. The Sikhs then came to the Gurdwara in force and ejected

the sadhus from that place and took possession of it. As a result, a Sub-Inspector of Police with some sergeants and a full body of police remained camped there for several weeks to prevent a disturbance as the Gurdwara was situated outside the city.

Respectable leaders of both the communities were also made to deposit securities and bound over for peace and good behaviour. I myself gave a piece of land belonging to me opposite our cemetery to that sadhu. This sadhu declared that he would not leave that place till he had burnt that Gurdwara. During the riots this sadhu along with two respectable Hindu leaders who had taken refuge with him remained there for two days and besides risking his own life, protected the lives of two other Hindus. Afterwards I learnt that some Sikh gentlemen had reported to the police that the burning of the Gurdwara had been instigated by that sadhu. So the police expelled him from that place and sent him out of the district.

Q. Did you see any other temples or Gurdwaras besides this Gurdwara that were burnt?

A. I do not know (on being reminded, the witness admitted that Khan Jogran which was built mostly of wood had also been burnt).

Q. Do you know how many Hindus and how many Mussalmans were killed on the 9th and 10th?

A. I do not know of any Hindu who was killed in the city on the night. Of Mussalmans, three were killed and three or four wounded. These included those boys also.

Q. Do you know the age of the child?

A. I have heard that that child was about 10 or 11 years old.

Q. Was anyone of them a child or were both of them children?

A. Both were children—one of them was 10 or 11 years, the other one was a bit older.

Q. Have you any knowledge of the casualties on the 10th September?

A. All the rest of the casualties took place on the 10th September. Eight Mussalmans were killed. The number of wounded was greater. But the number of dead and wounded among the Hindus exceeded that of Mussalmans.

Q. When did the Hindus from Kohat arrive in Rawalpindi?

A. On the eleventh Rai Bahadur Mathuradas and Rai Bahadur Isherdas sent me word that they were putting up in the Commercial House and that I should take them to the railway station. I went there with two motor cars and in seven trips brought them and their relatives to the railway station. The Hindus lying in the Commercial House and by the roadside were in very sore

straits. Their women folk also were sitting by the roadside in a very sad plight. The Government had made no arrangement whatever either for their accommodation or for removing them to the railway station.

Q. When did they remove to the Commercial House?

A. I learnt from them that they shifted to the Commercial House on the 10th September.

Q. The Hindus state that between 9th and 10th September several Hindus were forcibly converted to Islam. Do you know anything about it?

A. I think no Hindu was forcibly converted to Islam. But some Hindus who had taken shelter with the Mussalmans, feeling that their lives were in danger, themselves requested that their tuft of hair, etc., might be removed and their protectors, feeling that the lives of Hindus were really in danger, removed their *choti*[1] &c., and gave out that they had become Mussalmans.

Q. You had mentioned another procedure also?

A. Something like that might have happened. Only I have no knowledge of any case when a Mussalman in order to save the life of a Hindu advised him to become a Mussalman and removed his *choti*. I can, however, believe an incident like this taking place.

Q. Why do you believe it to be possible that some Mussalmans might have advised some Hindus to become Mussalmans to save their lives?

A. Simply because the people from the villages were uneducated and protection of life was a serious matter.

Q. Would you regard a person who has been converted to Islam in this manner as a Mussalman?

A. So long as such a person does not of his own free will declare himself to be a Mussalman in circumstances of peace, he cannot be regarded as a Mussalman.

From the typewritten office copy: S.N. 10530

[1] Tuft of hair

39. EXAMINATION OF AHMAD GUL ON KOHAT RIOTS[1]

[RAWALPINDI]
February 6, 1925

Q. Your name, Maulvi Saheb?

A. My name is Ahmad Gul.

Q. What work are you employed in?

A. I am a dentist.

Q. Since when are you the Secretary of Khilafat?

A. Since 1922.

Q. Since when do you live in Kohat?

A. I was born there.

Q. In your opinion what is the cause of the Kohat troubles?

A. In some respects I agree with Pir Kamal Saheb, but in others I differ. In my opinion the cause of the disturbances was the pamphlet.

Q. Any other cause, apart from the pamphlet?

A. There was another incident. In my life there were only two such occasions when the Mohammedans went to the Government in large numbers. One was the case of S. Makhan Singh's son and the other of the pamphlet. Besides these occasions never has such excitement prevailed. Neither they collected nor was there any such disturbance.

Q. Do you take only these two incidents as the cause of disturbances?

A. There were some mutual dissensions also.

Q. What was the matter regarding S. Makhan Singh's son?

A. There was a general rumour among the people that S. Makhan Singh's son had illegitimate connection with the wife of his gardener. He went away to Lahore and the *malan*[2] also followed him and this was followed with a great stir among the people. The Pathans as a community look upon this kind of action with hatred even if it is done by a Mussalman. Therefore the Government also treats the accused severely and the people are disturbed thereby even

[1] The source was defective and has been slightly edited, where absolutely necessary.

[2] Gardener's wife

if the case is between two Mussalmans. In the case of S. Makhan Singh's son the Government did not pay heed although a deputation waited. I mean to say that the Sardar's son was not convicted and the gardener did not get justice. It was a great shock to the Mussalmans when a Hindu or a Sikh dared to do so. It was also rumoured that S. Makhan Singh pacified the gardener by giving some money. It was also broadcast that S. Makhan Singh saved himself on other occasions also by payments.

Q. When did this occur?

A. It was about one year ago, i.e., one year before the pamphlet incident. When Jivandas was arrested and put into lock-up, S. Makhan Singh went to the jail in the capacity of a non-official visitor. The Jail Superintendent also complained against his conduct as a visitor as he interfered in jail arrangements. The Superintendent kept Jivandas in a solitary cell but the Sardar Saheb asked Jivandas to be taken out of it. There was a regular complaint about it as the daughter of Jivandas was betrothed to the Sardar's son. This rumour was also going round that Sardar Saheb would get Jivandas released in a few hours. After that when the first firing took place, the first thing that was heard was that the boys were killed before the house of Sardar Saheb. This was the past incident and again the release of Jivandas and the firing near Sardar Saheb's house excited the Mussalmans and in my opinion this is the reason of the disturbance.

Q. Who put out the rumour that Sardar Saheb and his son fired?

A. When I was in court and the crowd was being assured that Jivandas would be prosecuted, we had no complaint against other Hindus. The Mussalmans were satisfied when the court decided to proceed against the accused. The basis of the charge was being established, when the information reached there that firing took place in the bazaar. Ahmad Khan Saheb informed me and, taking me with him in motor car besides three other Mohammedans, proceeded to the scene of the occurrence. We entered the city by the Cantonment gate and were yet fifty paces from Sardar Saheb's place when we met a crowd of fifty or sixty which came to stop us and said that firing was going on and we should not proceed further. One boy was lying killed near Sardar Makhan Singh's *balakhana*[1] and one man was wounded. On this the motor car was brought back to Kotwali without being turned as the space was not adequate. The Kotwali might be a hundred paces distance from there.

Q. Did you go there where the firing took place?

A. No, I did not. My companion and myself got down from the motor car and Ahmad Khan Saheb went back. When I was going to my house from Kotwali, shots were being fired from all sides at that time and some people

[1] Upper apartment

also began to enter the city. In this fearful condition I went home as I was also indisposed. But later on I heard that the bazaar was being burnt and that three of the Mussalmans were killed and three were wounded.

Q. Did you hear of any Hindus being killed or wounded at that time?

A. I inquired about the Hindus also but no such case was reported to me. The night passed quietly.

Q. When did it happen?

A. It was on the 9th September.

Q. When you were in the motor car and were informed of the firing, did Ahmad Khan Saheb also go there?

A. Ahmad Khan Saheb did not go to the place of firing and went back.

Q. When did you go to the bazaar?

A. When I went with Ahmad Khan Saheb to the bazaar it was about half past one.

Q. You were mentioning some other matter besides this and before the Sardar Saheb's case?

A. Those are ordinary things and are not worth mentioning here.

Q. Pir Saheb said that since four or five years ago the Hindus were taking some steps in the cases of those converted to Islam and resorting to law-courts. This had shocked the Muslims. Do you also agree?

A. The village people might be of this idea as Pir Saheb has connection with people of the interior. He may be of that opinion but to my mind it cannot be so.

Q. Pir Saheb said that more than four years earlier the Hindus did not care for those Hindus who were converted to Islam, and it was since then that they were resorting to courts. What is your opinion in the matter?

A. In this respect I differ from him. It happened only in the cases of converted women and not of men. It is a different thing where a Hindu becomes a Muslim and the Hindus try to take him back. All have religious liberty. As the Muslims are in majority in the Frontier, the Government cares exceptionally for the religious feelings of the Muslims. For instance, in other districts the meat prohibited for Muslims is sold in bazaars or it is openly taken in the bazaar but such has not been the case in Kohat up till now. But on the contrary the meat prohibited for Hindus is openly sold and used in the bazaar in the Frontier especially in Kohat.

Q. When did you hear about the pamphlet?

A. I came to know of it on Friday the 29th August, when I was in the mosque.

Q. Who informed you?

A. One volunteer named Gulam Ayub gave me the pamphlet after he had entered the mosque with a big crowd. He had with him such people also who did not enter the mosque on account of their clothes being unfit for entering and stayed out.

Q. What did the volunteer do?

A. He told me that there was a great row in the bazaar on account of this pamphlet and these people wished to consult the general Muslim public about it and take such steps by which people may be subdued.

Q. What did you do again?

A. I took that book in my hand and from all sides people were asking me to read the poem in Pushtu which they had already heard; they wished to be acquainted with its subject-matter. I translated it before the crowd and also looking to their excitement and intention which I could guess I kept them back from resorting to any kind of disturbance and reminded them of the bad consequences of the riots in Malabar, Multan, Saharanpur and in other places and advised them that in case they could not control themselves they should go to the Government in this case also, as they were doing about other matters.

Q. You said that people wanted to hear what they had heard before; why was it so when they had already heard?

A. The crowd in the mosque said so, as some knew about it and others did not.

Q. But did it hear about it for the first time in the mosque?

A. Yes.

Q. What happened later on?

A. They were whispering to each other after that and were plotting against the Khilafatists and were complaining that these people were lagging behind even in religious matters. "They took thousands of rupees from us in subscriptions but when the time for the service of Islam has come, they hesitate." They also said that on a previous occasion Pir Kamal Saheb and myself degraded the Mussalmans by taking bribe from S. Makhan Singh.

Q. What happened over the pamphlet after that?

A. After that a letter from Sanatan Dharma Sabha came to me on 2nd September after *Isha* prayer, i.e., at about 9-30 p.m., in which Hindus had shown their excuse on behalf of the Hindus regarding the publication of the

pamphlet. I took that letter with me on 3rd September to the *mahalla*[1] of Parachgan where I had gone for condolence and where were collected people of different communities and read it to them and said that the members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha convey their apology in those words. When I read the letter to them, instead of being satisfied with it, they felt the tone and method of the letter was. . . .[2]; one of them expressed it thus, that when the soldiers were killed in the Great War and the King expressed his sorrow, this letter resembled the same. Neither there was any word of apology nor any such subject. After this the whole assembly went to the Superintendent of Police and the Assistant Commissioner so that the accused could be proceeded against. The Deputy Commissioner was at Usmana at that time. The Assistant Commissioner directed us to go to the court and he himself also went. The constables were sent to fetch Jivandas and he was brought into the room in our presence. After this the pamphlets were also sent for and Jivandas was put up in lock-up and the pamphlets were burnt there in the presence of the A.C.

Q. You said you went for condolence and there you read the letter and this was not liked by them. Did the Hindus do anything also?

A. I came to know there that some people had decided with Hindus without my knowledge that according to the custom of this place the members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha should come to a meeting to be held for this purpose as a jirga so that the matter be decided in consultation with the Ulemas.

Q. When the people said that the letter was not satisfactory, did you agree?

A. Looking to their attitude at that time, I did not think it advisable to give any kind of opinion and did not interfere.

Q. But what was your opinion?

A. My opinion was also the same. The letter did not smell of any apology.

Q. When Jivandas was arrested and the pamphlets were burnt, what was their number?

A. I could not say, there might have been more than 500.

Q. Were you told that the objectionable poem had been taken out of it?

A. Some such plea was put forward.

Q. The copies sent to the court were without that page?

A. Some leaves were shown separately.

[1] Locality

[2] There is a gap here in the source.



Q. Was there a portrait of Krishnaji on that book?

A. Yes Sir.

Q. Did any Hindu object to it?

A. No.

Q. Had anybody said so?

A. I would have been the first man to try to take out that leaf as there was no poem on it.

Q. What about the Peshawar Deputation?

A. On 4th September a deputation from Peshawar met me; after that Sayid Sikandar Shah Saheb came up fortunately. We were going to Pir Kamal Saheb, he met us on the way and we all went to a place near my house and talked about the matter. The Peshawar deputation and these two gentlemen tried to hush up the matter as far as they could, but the public excitement went high and everyone who tried to impose mild conditions or took up a mild attitude in this matter was suspected by the people.

Q. Did you meet in the presence of the public?

A. The public had come at that time and they troubled me so much that no occasion of a private talk with the deputation was given to me. Had I done anything against their opinion the same condition would have been created as the people had created against other national leaders. I was forced to be with them, because had I also been cut off from them there was great danger of the situation being serious, but I can say this much that, on account of my being with them, the Muslims heard my advice and did not take the lead in the disturbances.

Q. Were there Hindus also in that crowd at that time?

A. No, none. It is a different thing if there were any Sikhs standing there, as the Muslims had good opinion about them on account of their joining the Muslims on occasions of processions, etc. They could join in any meeting without any hindrance.

Q. What did the people want and what did the Peshawar Deputation do?

A. The public wanted that the Government should punish the accused in such a way that in future no Hindu should dare to publish such . . .[1] pamphlet. And the deputation wanted to decide the matter amongst ourselves as we were non-co-operators and did not like to take the matters to the Government. The conditions which were arrived at with the deputation were these:

[1] There is a gap here in the source.

That the matter be decided according to *shrah*[1] or according to the custom of the country; the members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha could come to the Muslims as a jirga. The deputation including Saiyid Pir Kamal Saheb talked to the Hindus but when these gentlemen met me afterwards they expressed their failure on [*sic*] behalf of the Hindus.

Q. Was Pandit Amir Chand[2] also there at that time?

A. Yes Sir. He was also there. When the deputation was talking to me about this matter in the presence of the public, he was hissed very much and Khilafatists also were cursed and it was rumoured about them that the Kohat Hindus had given ten thousand rupees as a bribe, therefore, these people not caring for our religious feelings were advising us to keep quiet on such an important matter.

Q. Pir Sahib said that the matter of jirga was not brought up in his presence?

(The previous statement of Maulvi Ahmad Gul was read to him and Saiyid Pir Kamal and others also explained the matter.)

Q. When the deputation, the Sayid Sahib and the Pir Sahib talked together, what conditions did they decide to present to the Hindus?

A. We had ceased even talking with the Hindus as the Muslims felt annoyed. I asked the deputation to appease the public who were in religious colour [*sic*] at that time.

Q. What did you all think about the matter?

A. We were in that house for about an hour and a half. It was on the 5th September and not on the 4th. On the 4th I met only the Peshawar deputation who were my guests.

Q. When you gathered on the 5th, what did you decide about the advice being given to the Hindus?

A. I decided that the case be handed over to the Government but the deputation did not wish it. At that time when the deputation and these two gentlemen met together nothing was decided.

Q. What did the people want?

A. The people wanted that the matter be handed over to the Government. The matter of *shrah* was also talked to the people. They would be very happy over it if the Hindus accepted.

[1] Injunctions of Koran

[2] A member of the Khilafat delegation of Peshawar

Q. If the people were ready for both the alternatives, then what was the necessity of appeasing them?

A. It was on account of this, that they wish to take revenge themselves. I made them understand not to take the law into their own hands.

Q. Who brought the people there?

A. The people came themselves and suspected the deputation. When the matter of jirga came up Pir Saheb was not present at that time.

Q. Were the Hindus told of the *shrah* and jirga?

A. I was not present there. Only the deputation talked to the Hindus and it came back with the reply that the Hindus did not accept either of the terms. A third term was also suggested by the deputation that the matter be handed over to the Khilafat, to which I replied that the Khilafat could not decide the matter as it had gone into the hands of the general public.

Q. What happened after 5th September?

A. The deputation went back to Peshawar on the 6th September. We all were under the impression that Jivandas was in lock-up and that he would be proceeded against.

Q. Was there any excitement in Kohat on the 6th and 7th September?

A. There was nothing of the kind on those days. Ordinary business was going on normally.

Q. At what time was Jivandas released on the 8th September?

A. On that day I had gone to Churqota and was away from 4 p.m. when Mian Fazal Shah and Mian Rahmat Ullah were with me. I returned from there after the prayers of *Magrab*[1]. On my way to Kohat, I met some village people bringing their necessaries. They told me, "You are here. Jivandas has been released and there is so much uneasiness prevailing in the city. People are gathering in the mosque of Hazrat Haji Bahadur." On this I went to the mosque. It was about 8.45 p.m. at that time. I saw a crowd in and outside the mosque which went protesting against the action of the D.C. in releasing Jivandas before the fixed date, the 11th September. I went inside the mosque and inquired what they wanted. They replied, "The Government does not care for our religious feelings." We also protested against those who advised the release of Jivandas. This charge was against some of my friends also. This I contradicted and advised the crowd that we will go to the D.C. on the 9th September and would inquire from him what good he thought would come by releasing Jivandas before time, and I asked the people to go to

[1] West

their homes and they went away. It was about half past ten or eleven that they left. Some time we spent in prayer also.

Q. Was there much excitement among the crowd?

A. Yes.

Q. You said that they were so very angry that they did not listen to you and then you said that you argued with them and made them understand that they would have justice and said, "If we failed, then you could do anything you liked".

A. Yes. Once the Hindus boycotted the Muslims and did not buy meat and vegetables from them. On this I posted pickets for two days on Hindu shops, which resulted in Hindu *halwais'*[1] sweets being left unsold. It was about two years ago. In fact I did boycott the Hindus. Had the Hindus not given up this attitude I would have recommended this method to the Muslims.

Q. Did the Muslims take oath of boycott in the meeting?

A. It is altogether wrong.

Q. And was there no talk of burning and looting?

A. Not at all.

Q. What happened on 9th September?

A. I approached the D.C. at the ground near the Town Hall with the people.

Q. What was the number of people with you?

A. About 2,000.

Q. Were there village people in the crowd?

A. People of the villages within the Municipality were there.

Q. Were not the people of far off places there?

A. Not of very far off places.

Q. What did you do then?

A. We gathered in the open and the D.C. went inside the Town Hall. The officers, etc., were also there. They called me inside, but the people in the crowd said that they would hear the talk in the open.

Q. Were you the leader of the deputation?

A. Yes. I was the leader. And according to their wishes I also said that we should talk in the open. At last the D.C. with other officers came out and addressing the crowd asked who would talk with him. All unanimously propos-

[1] Sweetmeat sellers

ed my name. I talked to the D.C. and asked why he released Jivandas before time. "This has excited the people, now you should talk to them and subdue their excitement." He replied that he had released him on bail with this idea that perhaps a large number of people would come on the appointed date, and the accused might be put to trouble. I said, "You did what you were to do, but now the demand of the people is that the one guilty of the pamphlet be hauled up and this can be only if some proceedings commenced in their presence to satisfy them." This was consented to by the D.C. and he told the Assistant Commissioner to take Jivandas's case in his own hands and commence the proceedings. After this the whole crowd reached the court as I have said before.

Q. Was the order of the D.C. conveyed to the crowd?

A. Whatever was being told by the D. C. in reply to my talk, I conveyed to the crowd at the same time. At the end I told the crowd, "The D.C. has accepted your demand." After this some dispersed and those from outside went to their homes. By outside, I mean villages nearby in municipal area; and some went to the court.

Q. Were there bamboos or axes in the hands of these people?

A. Some people had hand-sticks and some had bamboo-sticks. One or two of them had axes according to the custom of that place. The people use this in the Frontier as a pleasure.

Q. Was there no gun with anybody?

A. No gun. Had there been any, the D.C. would not come into the crowd.

Q. When did it end?

A. This ended at 12 noon.

Q. You went in motor car at half past one.

A. Yes.

Q. Is the garden of S. Makhan Singh outside the city?

A. It is near the court.

Q. Was it burnt on that date?

A. I came to know later on that on the first day the children plucked the fruits of the garden and destroyed much of it and spoiled small plants also. On the second or third day, it was also heard by me that the house in the garden was burnt.

Q. The Hindus say that this house was burnt on the 9th?

A. To my knowledge this house was not burnt on the 9th. I am fully satisfied.

Q. Was looting and burning commenced in Kohat on the 9th?

A. It was commenced in the bazaar. It was all right when I left. The houses of Hindus and Muslims were burnt and looted.

Q. Did you remain within your house on the 9th?

A. I did not stir out. People were coming to me and giving news.

Q. Up to what time did looting and burning go on on the 9th?

A. I believe the bazaar was burnt within two hours on the 9th. The flames were coming up in the night. Even on the second day the smoke was coming out. On the same occasion I heard looting was going on.

Q. When did the fire commence?

A. I was told that the flames of fire were seen at half past two.

—Ended at 12.30 p.m.

Commenced at 6.30 p.m.

Q. You said that you heard the news of firing in the court on the 9th and on this you came in motor car? Did you see yourself or did you hear from where the shot came?

A. I did not see. Neither did I see the children killed. I was told at that time that the shot came from the upper storey of Sardar Saheb as a result of which one child died and one man was wounded.

Q. Did you make any investigation about it?

A. No.

Q. Do you still believe that Sardar Saheb fired?

A. People told me so, that Sardar Saheb fired. Some said that a man was killed near the tahsil. Others said that it was he who died first.

Q. Did he die by Sardar Makhan Singh's shot?

A. I heard this.

Q. It was such a big thing and yet you did not make inquiries?

A. I did not inquire about anything. Nothing occurred to me. I was in such a condition of mind at that time that I was not able to form any opinion.

Q. What kind of relations were there between you and Sardar Sahib?

A. My relations with all Hindus have been friendly and with Sardar Saheb also.

Q. Was it not your duty to inquire from Sardar Saheb?

A. The condition was such that I could not reach him; I could neither form an opinion nor make any inquiry.

Q. When your relations with the Hindus have been good, did you think over the matter why all the Hindus whom I have seen think that you are the cause of all these troubles?

A. I myself have not been able to solve this mystery why they have formed such an opinion about me. There are some people to whom I went and for whose protection I arranged and I tried to bring about peace. Even then I have not been able to understand the cause and even now I fail to find out the cause of being blamed.

Q. Did you protect their womenfolk?

A. Many of them came into a compound. There was one beggar woman for whose *purdah* I arranged. Men were taken to *Hujra* and all the women to a big house with some men. This is what happened on 10th September at 3 p.m. The Muslims in my *mahalla* secured certificates from the Hindus whom they protected but I did not do even that.

Q. Can you recognize the Hindus whom you helped?

A. I helped many people including women. I recognize L. Ramji Mal. There was one Ladha Ram and also Pir Sahib of Than.

Question was put to L. Ramji Mal if he was there. He answered that B. Ahmad Khan was a friend of his father. "There were other Mussalmans also with whom we had good relations. I asked Maulvi Ahmed Gul if he could make some arrangements. He kept silent, but other Muslims said to him, 'Maulvi, let bygones be bygones, and the matter be ended now.' Other Mussalmans asked us what we wanted. They took out our children and we lived in the house of B. Ahmad Khan. On my return I said to M. Ahmad Gul, 'The Muslims are looting our houses because there is no one there.' On this, he replied, 'You should go to the Deputy Commissioner or Assistant Commissioner who would make arrangements.'"

Q. You say that other Muslim brethren gave refuge on the 10th?

A. Yes. In Jungle Khel, in Gari Muwaz Khan, Mahalla Mian Badshi Mian Khelan, Mahalla Pir Sayat-ul-Am, also Dr. Gulam Sadiq.

Question was put by S. Gurdit Singh: "When Maulana Saheb came in Kotwali on the 10th I told him how much ruin has taken place, to which he replied that that was the scene of Vishnu's temple. Was it so?"

A. Yes, I said so.

Q. Did all the Hindus go to cantonment on the 10th?

A. Some went because I myself went with three or four groups. The volunteers were sent for protection to all places. There may be one or two

instances in which Hindus suffered. I could not say. The Hindus were taken out from their houses and brought to *Thana* and handed over to the Government.

Q. What do you mean by handing over to the Government?

A. The authorities ordered that those who stayed behind and were safe be gathered in *Thana*. D. C. told me and the police also. I said that there were some in my house.

Q. Did the D.C. leave the management in your hands?

A. There was no particular management in my hands which the authorities could do, excepting that I would give them men, so that when people would enter the city from outside they could be recognized or if anybody would go out, it would be known that the man was not a suspicious character. There was Police and border [*sic*] with the volunteers also.

Q. Were you working with the D.C. or the Government?

A. I co-operated with them so far as by not doing so there would have been not much trouble to the people [*sic*].

Q. Are you a member of the Working Committee?

A. Yes.

Q. Are there Khilafatists on the Working Committee?

A. Four or five Khilafat workers are there.

Q. Who is the Chairman of the W.C.?

A. Nawabzada Bag Mohd. Khan, *rais*[1] of Tiri.

Q. Those who are with you here, are any of them members of the W.C.?

A. Now there are two sections of the W.C. The Khans of the city who belong to Kohat Tahsil form one party, whom the other party of city people do not recognize. There is one of my companions a member of the W.C. My connection is with the city people.

Q. What connection has the W.C. got with the Government?

A. It has no special connection with the Government. It was founded only to give relief to distressed Muslims and to arrange for the conduct of cases. In fact it was formed to arrange for a reconciliation with the Hindus. But if it could not be effected, then the Muslims would be helped in their cases.

Q. The settlement arrived at now, was it done by W.C.?

A. The members went to Peshawar many times but there was no settlement. When the Hindus went to Kohat, at that time open talk took place and

[1] Man of wealth

terms of settlement were reached and both the parties signed them. The signatures were put down by those also who were outsiders, which means those who had gone out of the W.C.

Q. When negotiations were going on at Peshawar, were you there?

A. I always went to Peshawar with the W.C.

Q. How many members of the deputation were present at Peshawar?

A. Sometimes six, at other times 12 or 15.

Q. Were you the spokesman there?

A. Either Nawab Sahib or Pir Sahib worked as spokesman as occasion arose, and sometimes I also talked. As I did not know English, I could not take more part in it.

Q. Who is the Secretary of the W.C. ?

A. Now Sheikh Abdul Rahman is the Secretary.

Q. Do you consider the last settlement a forced choice?

A. I could not say it was such. The officials described it as one beneficial for both the Hindus and the Muslims.

Q. Do you consider it a settlement free from all kinds of pressure?

A. I would have considered it as free if there had been no hand of any Government man. It was a settlement made under fear.

Q. Were the Muslims also put in jail before they were made to sign the settlement?

A. No, but the members of the Hindu deputation were put in jail and then their signatures were taken on the settlement. The conditions arrived at would not have been better between the Hindus and Muslims in my opinion whoever would have done it, as these were settled after full discussion. The discussion took place between the members of the Hindu and Muslim deputations and [the terms] were agreed upon unanimously.

Q. Why do you say so, that there could not be better terms?

A. Because conditions were such. Jivandas was released and we felt helpless. Because of the way in which he approached the people we could not say anything in his favour; he was guilty before God. When he did not obey the *Shariat*[1] he was handed over to the court as we could not help it; we feared the Ulemas.

Q. Had all the Muslims demanded the release of Jivandas, would the Government still detain him?

[1] Divine law of the Muslims

A. The Government said that they would take up the case against him. I could not say the Government would let him go if the Muslims agreed.

Q. Why was such a restriction placed regarding the Gurdwara? Could not the Sikhs expect something better from the Muslims?

A. They could not expect anything better as there were many mosques nearby. According to old records, the Sikhs could not construct it. It would have demolished itself. One mosque was erected near it and it fell of itself. I agreed on their behalf that the Sikhs must be given the same status as before the 9th. The condition of the cutcha wall was made because the public did not like the first condition.

Q. What became of looting and burning after the 10th?

A. Firing was going on the 10th but no looting and burning took place after that.

Q. Could you give any estimate of proportion of losses of Hindus?

A. I could not tell.

Q. Was the loss of the Hindus greater?

A. Surely the Hindus suffered more.

Q. Is the booty or loot to be found in the villages or Kohat?

A. I could not say about it that some goods like cloth were recovered and they are deposited in the Tahsil by the authorities. I could not say if the goods were in Kohat. They must have gone into villages.

Q. Do you agree with Pir Saheb regarding the change of faith? Was there any such incident on the 9th and 10th?

A. I agree with him. It took place in those days as Pir Saheb said.

Q. Are you of the same opinion that every year 100 or 150 conversions take place?.

A. I do not agree with the number. To my mind the number is 40 in a year on the average and in this people from outside are also included.

Q. Are you of the same opinion as Pir Saheb regarding conversion of women?

A. If no pressure has been used in the case of a woman. If she accepts Islam under pressure, the Muslims are forced to let her go to her Hindu husband.

Q. If the court decides in favour of the Hindu husband, would the Muslims still not return the woman?

A. No, the Muslims would not agree to it and will consider her connection with her Hindu husband illegitimate.

Q. Can the Muslims conceal the woman or adopt some other method about it?

A. It will be the duty of the Muslims not to let the woman go to her Hindu husband, as her bond with her Hindu husband is broken as soon as she accepts Islam.

Q. How can the Hindus go back to Kohat?

A. When they would agree to two conditions. First they would not publish such a pamphlet and they would not fire as they fired. If they would accept [these terms] they could go at any time they liked; there is no danger. I see no reason for any disturbance in future if they would give up such injurious methods. The Muslims' attitude will be all right if these people are careful.

Q. Should they accept both of these conditions?

A. We did not fix any conditions before nor do we now.

Q. I would therefore ask you what they should do?

A. I don't fix any condition. They can come without any conditions.

Q. If I would seek your advice, what would you suggest?

A. I would advise them to go to their places, but they should take the Frontier into account and mind the temperament of the Pathans.

Q. Is the atmosphere of Kohat such that Hindus cannot live in Kohat honourably?

A. I have not seen such conditions nor heard it that their living there honourably is difficult.

(At this stage S. Makhan Singh said that the treatment meted out to Hindus was not the same as before.)

Q. To Hindus! Why so much said against the Maulvi Sahib?

A. Individually there is no complaint against him.

Q. (by S. Gurdit Singh) Was the apology considered in your presence when the apology was thought over by the Sanatan Dharma Sabha on the 2nd September? Were you there at that time?

A. I was not there, I came to know only when I got the letter. There was no mention of apology.

Q. (by M. Shaukat Ali) Did you come to know or try to know if any invitation for looting was given to the Muslims of the city or of outside on the 8th or before that?

A. No.

Q. Had there been any such movement or others would have done so, was it possible that the matter would not have come to your notice?

A. Had there been any such plot or movement, I would have got the news anyhow.

Q. Was the incident of 9th a pre-arranged one or accidental?

A. There was no arrangement by the Muslims, at least I had no idea at all.

Q. Do you know that any Khilafat worker or volunteer took part in burning or looting of Hindu houses?

A. No.

Q. Did they put fire to any bazaar or take part in looting or in exciting the people for it?

A. No, I don't think.

Q. How many volunteers are there?

A. There are 14 or 15 volunteers nowadays.

Q. Did any of them take part in it?

A. It was put into my ears, but I could not say that they did it.

Q. You non-co-operated when the Khilafat declared it; when did you commence co-operating?

A. I worked with my volunteers only [in some things] in which the Government authorities took part, so that people be not put to trouble.

Q. Did you go to the D.C. before that and ask his help?

A. Once when I joined the Anjuman one year ago, I had to go to the D.C. about the Anjuman School. Since the Khilafat commenced, besides this occasion I did not go to the D.C.

Q. What troubles arose that you gave up your principle?

A. People were suspecting the workers that they would not hear anybody. They trusted me alone. If I had gone out then, such people would have entered the field and it would have been more troublesome.

Q. Since when did you begin to mix with the officials?

A. I commenced since the pamphlet matter and it was not officially. Since I joined the Khilafat I had given up co-operation.

Q. Do your enquiries make you believe the Muslim lad was killed by the first shot?

A. Yes, on hearing of the same shot I went to bazaar.

Q. Had there been no such accident, the disturbances would not have occurred. Do you believe it?

A. Certainly not.

Q. (by Maulana Shaukat Ali) Did the volunteers take part in looting?

A. I could not swear about it that no volunteers took part.

Q. Did you hear anything about it?

A. I heard much about it, I don't think that any Muslim took part in loot.

Q. Did the Khilafatists take part in looting and burning the shops and troubling the Hindus?

A. I could not swear about it. I have heard complaints that the Muslims did so.

(Pir Sahib said none was free from it. Khilafat volunteers were also in it.)

Q. Did you hear that the Khilafat volunteers took part in looting?

A. Yes, I heard.

Q. Were the Khilafat volunteers sent out with a message to bring outsiders for loot?

A. I have no knowledge.

—Ended at 8.30 p.m.

From the typewritten office copy: S.N. 10531

40. *TELEGRAM TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA*[1]

February 7, 1925

PANDIT MALAVIYAJI
BIRLA HOUSE
DELHI

REACHING DELHI TOMORROW MORNING BHATINDA MAIL.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

[1] This telegram was also sent to Motilal Nehru, Delhi and Khwaja Abdul Majid, Aligarh.

41. TO KATHIAWARIS

In a few days I shall be again in Kathiawar, and that, too, in Rajkot this time. Shri Bharucha has been so much impressed by Kathiawar that he has asked for permission to prolong his stay there and propagate the spinning-wheel movement. I hope that the usual remark about our being enthusiastic merely in the beginning will not be proved true in this case. If the political leaders of Rajkot decide, they can infuse new life in Rajkot as also in other parts of Kathiawar. "In other parts", because Rajkot is the central place and, as it is the headquarters of the (Political) Agency also, political workers foregather there. No one can say that politicians are pressed for time, and they have sufficient influence over the people. They can make the whole of Kathiawar khadi-minded, revitalize it and check the exodus of Kathiawaris for a few pounds of *bajri*[1]. We shall not understand how the problem will be solved in this way, by asking the question what a person can earn through the spinning-wheel; we shall be convinced that it can be, if we calculate how much money the people will save. If we only think how much everyone will suffer by the increase of a pie in a rupee in the salt tax, we shall see no reason to be seriously upset. But when we calculate the total revenue yielded by this impost, we shall be astounded by the figures. Loss of this kind is like a prick by the cobbler's needle. It is felt by the society as a whole. We can deduce from this the effect on every individual.

Similar is the case with the spinning-wheel. Suppose that in every home spinning brings half an anna every day. That will amount to twelve rupees at the end of a year. And if we assume that there are five persons in every home, then, $2{,}600{,}000 \div 5 = 520{,}000 \times 12 = 6{,}240{,}000$, that will be the figure of rupees saved for Kathiawar. Let us do another calculation. Assuming that for every person in the population of 2,600,000 on the average five rupees are spent every year on cloth, Kathiawar uses cloth worth Rs. 13,000,000. If we deduct from this sum one-third as representing the cost of cotton, then Kathiawar will be saving Rs. 9,000,000.

What a glow of fresh life would the people of Kathiawar feel if they found that they were exempted to the tune of nine million

[1] Coarse millet

rupees from the levy which they have to pay to the Bombay Government annually! If we give up counting the benefit to each of us individually, we would understand the invisible gains or losses in which we share. I expect the people of Kathiawar to count the collective gain or loss. If Kathiawar does that today, the rest of India will follow suit. If we merely ask, "What will it profit to me?" our conclusion will be absurd and ruinous. Activities beneficial to society will be undertaken when we learn to ask: "How will this benefit the people?" If every person thought of his own gain, all would be ruined. When all seek the benefit of all, that is, collective welfare, the whole society and every member of it would benefit.

If the Kathiawaris think on these lines, they will realize the miracle which the spinning-wheel can work. And I hope to receive from them a balance-sheet drawn on these lines of work done in this month. Did those who took the pledge to spin do the spinning every day? Have those who did not know spinning learnt it? Has the cotton for which an appeal was addressed to the people been collected? If it has been, has any plan been drawn up regarding its disposal? The Executive Committee and the individual workers will have to answer these and many other similar questions.

I expect of Rajkot, too, a similar balance-sheet of work done. Preparations are under way there for honouring me. What need is there to honour me? If the people think, however, that they ought to honour me, they can do so by raising a pile of yarn before me and by every person adorning himself in khadi. I can take no pleasure in high-sounding epithets. I shall be undertaking this my second visit to Kathiawar in the hope of being able to propagate the cause of khadi and spinning, for serving the *Antyajas*, the people and the Rulers.

I shall be opening a national school at Rajkot. I believe that sincere workers have been giving their services for it. The Gujarat Provincial Committee has donated liberally towards its establishment. His Highness the Thakore Saheb has given land at a low price. I wish that the citizens of Rajkot should take interest in this school. They should watch it, correct any mistakes it may be making and, if it has men of character on its staff, help it by sending their children to it. It is but proper that Rajkot itself should shoulder the burden of its expenses.

This time my tour of Kathiawar will include a visit to Wadhwan. I shall give a few hours to the town for the sake of the national school there. Great sacrifices have been made for

its sake. I have heard of much criticism against it, too. Clouds have gathered over it, and cleared. Some khadi work has been done in the town. It is, again, a town which claims Motilal as its citizen. It has enjoyed the benefit of Shivlal's enterprising spirit and wealth. I will expect many things from this town. I am sure it will not disappoint me.

I wish that, instead of wasting their time and resources on honouring me, people at every place which I visit should think of utilizing my services. I request the workers to see that my time and that of the public is not wasted in useless speeches. May I claim a right to beg that, wherever a meeting is organized as being unavoidable, every man and woman attending it will be clad in khadi?

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 8-2-1925

42. *MAHARAJA OF MYSORE*

His Highness the Maharaja of Mysore has taken up spinning. This news cannot but gladden the hearts of those who look upon it as a sacred duty. The correspondent reporting this news also adds that this development has followed Sir Prabhashanker Pattani taking up spinning. We need not get elated on hearing of these instances. Even so, they draw attention to the nature and extent of the power which lies in spinning. Moreover, the example of eminent men is bound to have an effect on the common people. I congratulate the Maharaja of Mysore and hope that he will not give up till the end of his life this activity which he has taken up. It will do immense good to him and his subjects. Its immediate benefit may seem insignificant, but I have no doubt that it will ultimately grow into an impressive giant tree. The work of spinning will become a golden link binding the Maharaja and his subjects. This will revive the rule that princes should engage themselves in useful work which is calculated to benefit the subjects, the knowledge that even the work done by the poorest among the subjects has a place in the palace of the Maharaja will always act as an inspiration to the people, and it will be established that in reality there is no distinction of class between the prince and the poor. Such results do not follow from a few days' work. They require continuous and regular work, done with complete faith.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 8-2-1925

43. TRUE EDUCATION

The following letter of Dr. Sumant Mehta came into my hands only during my recent journey to Delhi. For one thing, during tours I do not receive my post regularly and, for another, even if letters are received in time my secretary cannot look into them immediately. After he has seen them, he passes on to me those needing immediate attention, and I can look into them as and when I find time. This naturally entails delays. Had I received Dr. Sumant Mehta's letter in proper time, I would have made use of it during the convocation[1]. That occasion was missed. I, therefore, discuss the letter here. It reads as follows:[2]

I welcome this letter. In fact, Acharya Gidwani[3] had acted on the idea underlying the main suggestion made in it. That is, *snatakas*[4] were posted at various places for social service and contact was maintained with them. This practice was not a part of the curriculum but was followed in individual cases and on an experimental basis. The doctor proposes, and rightly, that it should be made a permanent feature and included in the curriculum itself. The letter seems to imply that the doctor intends his scheme to be adopted in place of the present scheme of studies.

Personally, I might like even that; there is, however, no need to completely replace the present scheme, and even if there be, it is not possible to do so. We had in mind the students' inclinations when framing it. In comparison with other provinces, Gujarat felt the spirit of service a little late. Every student, therefore, will not be eager for a course of studies essential for training in service. Moreover, along with the needs of social service we have to pay attention to the problem of livelihood. The prevailing idea is that education is intended to equip the student with the means of livelihood. If the aim were no more than this, it could be excused, but there is also the idea that education should help the student to make money or to get appointed to a position of authority. As long as this attitude does not change, our curriculum is bound to remain

[1] Of the Gujarat Vidyapith

[2] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had expressed dissatisfaction with the education programme of the Gujarat Vidyapith and, emphasizing the need for training political and social workers, offered some concrete suggestions.

[3] A. T. Gidwani, principal of the Gujarat Mahavidyalaya, Ahmedabad

[4] Graduates of Gujarat Vidyapith

defective from a theoretical point of view. I think it impossible to change it immediately. But it is essential, and quite possible, gradually to reduce the idea of career to secondary importance.

The Vidyapith also will have to create for the students fields of social service which can offer them means of livelihood. Livelihood may not be the aim of education, but the ability to earn it must be one of the fruits of education. The aim of education is spiritual development, and where this is achieved, the ability to make a living is bound to follow.

It is also noted that students are not happy unless they acquire a knowledge of English. They also crave for a knowledge of literature. There can be no harm at all in either. We have only to guard against making a fetish of them, against making the study of English and of literature the sole aims of education and forms of self-indulgence. In their right place, which they occupy at present, they are of great value.

It cannot be maintained that the curriculum of the Government colleges is in every respect harmful. I do not feel that all of it deserves to be kept out. Its features of parrot-learning, prohibition of the use of the mother tongue, grand display of the knowledge of English, one-sided study of history, almost complete indifference to our ancient culture, absence of training in self-control, all these and similar features must be guarded against.

I, therefore, believe that there is considerable room for improvement in the present curriculum of the Vidyapith. But this is sooner said than done. Who will effect the improvement? There is none among its workers who is rich in the experience of life. Those who are in charge of formulating the curriculum are products of Government colleges. Some of them may have been disillusioned about those colleges, but how can we expect them to have a new vision and experience of new methods? Hence the defects in the curriculum of national education. The heads of all institutions have tried to effect what improvements they could and their efforts have met with some measure of success.

Now a word about Dr. Sumant Mehta's suggestion. I agree that the programme of studies embodied in his proposal deserves to be implemented. Some of the subjects suggested therein can be introduced in the early stages of the course in the Mahavidyalaya. Some others can be taught even in the pre-Mahavidyalaya stage. Yet some others seem to be such as might be taught after the general studies are completed. I invite Dr. Sumant Mehta to prepare his plan of study in detail. I could have done this even by writing a letter to him. The reason for writing about the subject

here is to induce the teachers and the students to think about it, discuss it and also help Dr. Sumant Mehta. We have very few persons who can think. And even those we have are busy each in his own field of work. This position is becoming normal day by day, as is proper that it should. If everyone were to dabble in every subject, he would do justice neither to the subject nor to himself. Unless each one of usselects his own field of work and works with single-minded devotion in that, we shall never achieve our goal. The task of implementing the plan will have to be accepted by the Doctor himself. Thoughtful teachers and social workers who take interest in academic matters may assist him. My role was to bring them and him together and, to an extent, express my own views. The Doctor has retired to Petlad for one year, and he has an opportunity there for experimenting with his scheme. It will be easy for him, therefore, to elaborate it.

When it is fully developed, the scheme will require teachers who can implement it, but that is a separate problem. I am sure that we shall get them when the need for them arises.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 8-2-1925

44. *KOHAT HINDUS*

[February 9, 1925]

I know that the pages of this week's *Young India* will be searched for the finding of Maulana Shaukat Ali and myself on the tragedy of last September. I am sorry to disappoint the curious. For Maulana Shaukat Ali is not with me and I must not publish anything without his first seeing it. I may, however, tell the reader that I have already discussed my impressions with Pandit Motilalji, then Pandit Malaviyaji and lastly with Hakim Saheb Ajmal Khan[1], Dr. Ansari and the Ali Brothers, and I have just[2] finished writing them out during my journey to Sabarmati. My notes will be immediately forwarded to Maulana Shaukat Ali and I shall hope to publish them[3] together with Maulana Shaukat Ali's endorsement, addition, or amendment as the case may be. But

[1] 1865-1927; physician and politician; President, Indian National Congress, 1921

[2] On February 9

[3] *Vide* "Kohat", 19-3-1925.

apart from the finding, I am in a position to reiterate my advice to the Hindus that in their place I should not return to Kohat unless there is an honourable peace with the Mussalmans without the Government intervention. This is not possible at the present moment. For unfortunately, the Muslim Working Committee which is at present guiding the Mussalmans of Kohat was not and would not be represented before us. I can appreciate the delicate position of the Hindus. They do not want to lose their property. The Maulana Saheb and I have failed to bring about peace. We have failed even to draw the principal Mussalmans for a discussion. Nor am I in a position to say that we should succeed in our attempt in the near future. In the circumstances the Hindus are at liberty to take any course they may consider advisable. In spite of our failure, I can only advise one course. "Don't return till the Mussalmans take you to Kohat with self-respect and dignity." But I know that this is cold comfort except for those who are able to stand on their own legs and are in need of no advice from any quarter whatsoever. Such is not the position of the Kohat refugees. I have conveyed my views to Pandit Malaviyaji. He has been their guide from the beginning and they must act as he advises them. Lalaji came to Pindi but he was unfortunately laid up in bed. My own considered opinion is given in the statement sent to Maulana Shaukat Ali. But I confess in advance that it will bring no solace to them. I am but a broken reed not worth relying upon.

But there is no hesitation about my advice regarding what the refugees should do whilst they are outside Kohat. I cannot help remarking that it is demoralizing for men and women who have strong arms and legs and who are otherwise physically fit, to subsist on charity. They must find out some occupation for themselves or with the aid of the local men. I have suggested carding, spinning and even weaving. But they may do any other useful work they choose or that may be chosen for them. The idea is that no person, man or woman, who is physically fit should live on charity. There must be always enough occupation in a well-ordered State for all who are willing to work. The refugees must be able to give a good account of every minute of their time whilst they are being supported by the nation. "Idle hands some mischief still will ever find to do" is not a mere schoolboy rhyme. It contains a profound truth which can be verified by everyone for himself. Let there be no distinction between rich and poor, high and low. They are all bed-fellows in adversity. And the rich and the well-to-do should set an example to the others by labouring usefully even though they may not be drawing rations.

What an incalculable good it must be to a nation whose members know an occupation which can stand them in good stead in distress. The refugees' life would have taken a nobler turn if they had all been spinners or carders or weavers. The regugees' camp would then have presented the appearance of a busy hive and could have been kept up indefinitely. If the men do not decide to return at once, it is not yet too late to mend. It is a mistake to issue dry rations. It is no doubt less trouble to the committee of management but it means more waste and utter indiscipline among the refugees. They should place themselves under soldiers' discipline keeping regular hours for rising, washing, praying, feeding, working and retiring. There is no reason why there should not be *Ramayana* readings or such other readings for them. All this requires thought, care, attention and diligence. Given these the calamity could be turned into a blessing in disguise.

Young India, 12-2-1925

45. TELEGRAM TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

February 9, 1925

PANDIT MALAVIYA
BIRLA HOUSE
DELHI

WHAT ABOUT COW PROTECTION CONSTITUTION. HOPE YOU ARE GOING RAWALPINDI TODAY.

GANDHI

From the handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

46. TELEGRAM TO JAIRAMDAS DAULATRAM[1]

February 9, 1925

JAIRAMDAS[2]
C/O RAMPYARELAL VAKIL
RAWALPINDI

WIRE LALAJI'S HEALTH. POST NAMES AND OTHER PARTICULARS. TWO PERSONS MURDERED NEAR KOHAT NINTH SEPTEMBER.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

47. LETTER TO CHAMANLAL VAISHNAV

Maha Vad 1 [February 9, 1925][3]

BHAI CHAMANLAL[4],

I write this on the train. I got your letter. It is impossible for me to go there before the 16th. I am afraid I shall be able to do so only about the 20th or 21st, or it may well be the visit is cancelled.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 2869. Courtesy: Shardabehn Shah

[1] The addressee accompanied Gandhiji to Rawalpindi in connection with the Kohat riots.

[2] b. 1892; Secretary, Sind Provincial Congress Committee; later became Minister of Food and Agriculture, Government of India; Governor of Bihar and Assam

[3] Gandhiji visited Wadhwan on 21st February 1925 and performed the opening ceremony of a children's school there.

[4] A political worker of Wadhwan

48. LETTER TO DEVCHAND PAREKH

Maha Vad 1 [February 9, 1925][1]

BHAI DEVCHAND,

I write this letter on the train. I am not spending money on a wire. I got your letter. I cannot have time enough to reach Wankaner on the 14th. All my time will be taken up by Borsad. But they can (if they come to Rajkot) have an hour more at Wankaner on the 15th.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

BHAI DEVCHAND PAREKH
BARRISTER
JETPUR

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 5712

49. TELEGRAM TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY

February 9, 1925[2]

P.S.V.
DELHI

DOES HIS EXCELLENCY NOW CONSIDER IT POSSIBLE TO PERMIT ME AND MY COLLEAGUES TO VISIT KOHAT DURING BEGINNING MARCH.[3]

GANDHI

From a hand written draft: S.N. 2456; also *Young India*, 26-2-1925

[1] The postmark bears "Jetpur, 11 Feb. 25".

[2] February 10, as reproduced in *Young India*, 26-2-1925. It is likely that the telegram, though drafted on February 9, was sent on February 10.

[3] On February 13, the Private Secretary to the Viceroy sent the following reply: "His Excellency the Viceroy desires me to thank you for your telegram and the courtesy that prompted it. His Excellency would have been glad to be able to fall in with your wishes. But his attention has been called to the advice you have just given in *Young India* to the Kohat Hindus not to return to Kohat unless the Muslims make honourable peace with them without Government intervention. The only construction His Excellency can put on this article is that if you went to Kohat your influence would be directed towards the break-

50. LETTER TO SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

[Before *February 10, 1925*][1]

I have a letter charging you with adultery. I had heard the charge even at Bhavnagar when we were there. But I did not believe it. Now it has come from a man whom I cannot ignore. Can this be true? I was highly pleased at your straightforwardness and courage. But what to do if this is true?

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

51. TELEGRAM TO SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

SABARMATI,
February 10, 1925

SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI
BHAVNAGAR

DELIGHTED YOUR LETTER.[2] THANK YOU. HOPE YOU ARE RESTORED.

GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 3191. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

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down of the recent settlement, the effecting of which was a matter of great concern to His Excellency and from which he hopes and believes an enduring reconciliation will spring. His Excellency is sure therefore that you yourself will appreciate how impossible it is for him to fall in with your wishes."

[1] & [2] The reply received on February 10, 1925 said: "There were some lapses in early youth, but I do not remember to have committed any such acts on the strength of my official position. You say you will destroy my letter; but why should you? My letters are opened by my secretary and my clerks. I am dictating this letter to Batuk, and Lady Pattani also has read this letter."

52. LETTER TO SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

Maha Vad 2 [February 10, 1925][1]

SUGNA BHAISHRI,

I returned from Rawalpindi yesterday. Today I got your letter for which I was waiting. I could not resist sending a telegram conveying my thanks. Please do not be angry with the person who wrote to me. I shall try to let you know his name also. On reading that you do not consider any letter as wholly confidential, I have begun to feel more proud of mankind. I feel humbled. I thought that I was perhaps the only person who had nothing private or confidential. You have surpassed me, because you are living in an environment where it would be difficult to publicize one's private life. Had the writer been a schemer or a wicked man, I would have written nothing to you from his letter, nor would I have allowed it to influence me in the least. But he is a gentleman, discriminating, disciplined and learned. He cannot possibly have any malice towards you; but I can well understand how he came to commit this mistake. I am sending him a copy of your letter. It will do him good. He is such a pure-minded person that I wouldn't be surprised if he came to you and offered his apology. I did well in writing the letter to you. You recollect your past lapses; but who is free from these? I have been saved thrice from falling. It was not owing to my own strength but owing to my unlettered mother. She bound her son by the thread of a vow and he was saved.

I shall reach Rajkot on the 16th. Shall we meet there or anywhere else?

Vandemataram from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3196. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

[1] Gandhiji returned to Sabarmati from Rawalpindi on February 9.

53. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

Maha Vad 2 [February 10, 1925][1]

BHAISHRI FULCHAND,

Here is the outcome of your letter. I am keeping the original with me. Tell me if you still have any doubt. Also let me know if your doubt is cleared. At the moment I do not have time for more.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 2867. Courtesy: Shardabehn Shah

54. SPEECH AT SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, SABARMATI

February 10, 1925

I am in the predicament of a man who having come to know that there is a serpent under his mattress shakes the mattress vigorously, sweeps the room and washes the floor with water. I have come to know what I did not know earlier about the situation in Kohat. I talk to you about it because it is a matter concerning religion. We all have to take this as a warning. It does not mean that we have to do something special and novel; but we have to prepare ourselves mentally and emotionally. We have to become purer.

At this stage Gandhiji referred to the number of conversions in Kohat and said:

That number may possibly be considered as small elsewhere. In an area where Muslims barely number 15,000, this is terrible. The Hindus there woke up and the Muslims could not tolerate the awakening; those looking for a chance to wreak vengeance found it in the form of that booklet. If that was the only reason, the man concerned could have been arrested, he could have been crushed, and perhaps all those connected with the booklet could have been crushed. But here the whole community was persecuted. Its cause must be deep-seated. I found that

[1] The letter seems to have been written on the same day as the preceding item.

cause quite by chance. The Muslims said many things frankly about proselytization. But that activity has hurt me very much. I would not mind it at all if 30 crores of Hindus became Muslims as a result of scriptural studies and rational arguments. Then I would be the single Hindu left and thereby I would add lustre to Hinduism. Or I would adduce proof of the immortality of Hinduism and say that the others became Muslims because they could not bear the brilliance of Hinduism. But if people turned Muslims out of greed or fear, as it happened there, I could not endure it. I am talking about this matter because I want to make you strong of mind, in order that you may be more attached to dharma. Despite this, there will be no change in my non-violent behaviour, my attitude of love and in my behaviour towards Muslims. The more I see their weaknesses, the more shall I serve them. My love for them will certainly endure. But the language of love will change—it has become more firm and will become firmer still—just as my words to Englishmen are becoming stiffer. That will be the only difference. My sole object is to rouse you this morning and to caution you. I want to caution you because you may sometimes face a similar situation. If any little boy or girl in the Ashram is kidnapped, you should not just look on, interpreting my non-violence in a superficial way. The determination to be pure is itself a source of strength. A man having a pure and unsullied heart has no need to develop his body. His body automatically becomes strong. And thereafter mere resolve is enough. It is my resolve that I would utter the name of Rama before retiring, so that without chanting that name I can never get sleep. And if I do get it, I utter *Ramanama* while turning on my side and I do see my Rama standing near me. The same is true of every resolve.

Even a child in the Ashram is not afraid if he faces danger. If he does not have strength of soul, he surely has nails. We clip nails because dirt accumulates in them. When they grow big they get in the way and we clip them. In like manner, we should go on removing the dangerous elements in the body one by one.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 136-7

55. LETTER TO MANEKLAL AMRITLAL GANDHI

ON THE TRAIN,
Tuesday [February 10, 1925][1]

CHI. MANEKLAL,

I have your letter. I follow what you say about Babu. You did well in sending him. If he can afford to stay, it is well and good.

Prabhudas has improved a lot with the change of climate there. It would be nice if Mani did likewise. But she worries a lot. And worry kills one.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I hope to reach Porbunder on the 19th. Devchandbhai must be thinking what to do if the epidemic spreads.

CHI. MANEKLAL AMRITLAL GANDHI
RANAVAV
KATHIAWAR

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 890. Courtesy: Maneklal A. Gandhi

56. LETTER TO RAMESHWARDAS BIRLA

SABARMATI,
Magh Krishna 4 [February 11, 1925][2]

BHAI RAMESHWARDASJI,

Your letter. Jamnalalji[3] is here at present. He tells me that Rs. 10,000 have been received at his firm. I shall use the sum for the service of the *Antyajas*.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]

Glad to know that you are quite well.

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6104. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] From the postmark

[2] The Vikram date appears to be incorrect as the postmark has "Anand 11-2-25."

[3] Jamnalal Bajaj (1889-1942); social worker and philanthropist, close associate of Gandhiji; treasurer, Indian National Congress for many years

57. SPEECH AT ANKLAV

February 11, 1925

Swaraj is there where the poorest of the poor can live happily. It is we who have not known hunger that are responsible for famine. A hundred years ago women of this village used to spin and men used to spin or else to weave.

The *Dharalas* have some bad habits. They drink liquor and commit thefts. As long as these things persist, religion is not safe. Unfortunately Hindus and Muslims here keep reviling each other. One's religion should be dear to oneself, but if untouchability is a part of Hinduism, I will have none of it. Even if a man has bathed and washed off his filth, we believe that still we cannot touch him—this attitude is sinful. The people of India are the *Dheds* and *Bhangis* of the world. A man has to answer for his deeds. It is not the fault of the British that we are slaves. The tree of slavery has grown from the seed of untouchability in our midst.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 138-9

58. SPEECH AT BORSAD

February 11, 1925

Borsad has become a place of pilgrimage, thanks to the satyagraha struggle. But the holy places in India are no longer holy, and I hope this has not become the fate of Borsad. Your struggle and the success you achieved in it were no ordinary ones. But to fight a battle is one thing, and to follow it up with constructive work is another. One discovers that to reap happy benefits from one's success is a difficult matter, and it often seems as if the struggle had never been fought. To return to the normal conditions after a struggle is as difficult as after a prolonged fast. We discovered this even after the Kheda agitation, and feel it after the present struggle. We saw the same thing, on a wider scale, in Europe. There, a great War was fought between Britain and Germany; colossal sacrifices were made and we had expected to see a new Europe as a result of these, expected to see its people more moral and pure, wiser and more godfearing. But the evil ways which prevailed there persist even today, and the people

who made the sacrifices are in an unhappy plight. Let us hope that the difference in the manner of fighting that War and our struggle will be reflected in their respective outcomes. In the War in Europe, the two sides fought to destroy each other. In a satyagraha struggle, neither side is destroyed, but on the contrary both benefit. How does it happen, then, that we do not see the desired result at the end of even such a pure struggle as satyagraha? The reason is just this, that we find excitement to be a common feature of the two kinds of fighting. We are not able to maintain an atmosphere of peace and show patience, as we should, and so we seem to lose the gain we have made. About Borsad, however, the Durbar Saheb had forewarned me that he would not be able to show me Khadinagar, that the struggle had not taught the people the value of khadi. I did not, therefore, come here with any high hopes and so I am not very much disappointed either.

Even running a school requires considerable ability. The aphorism, as in one's body so in the universe, holds true on all occasions. If I can conduct the Satyagraha Ashram well, I can succeed even in Lord Reading's seat. The difficulties I have to face in conducting the Ashram, the anxious thought I have to bestow and the number of problems I have to solve, I do not have to in a struggle like yours. What after all is to be done in running a campaign? I have to chalk out a programme and tell you what to do, merely give instructions to people; running an Ashram is much more difficult than this. I have no aspiration to be a Viceroy ever in this life; I only wish to be a devoted servant of the country. But I beg leave to say that running an Ashram taxes one's spiritual resources more agonizingly than discharging the duties of a Viceroy ever does. You, too, I wish, should tax yourselves in like manner in running the Vidya Mandir, for the more one suffers the purer one becomes.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-2-1925

59. SPEECH AT BHADRAN[1]

February 11, 1925

Before I thank you for your love and the address you have presented to me, I have one request to make. You have assembled here in such a large number at this late hour of the night. I would be guilty of a crime against you if I did not say that this makes me happy. But there is also something else which pains me. I do not know if the organizers of the meeting deliberately made the arrangements which we find here, but by now everyone who attends such meetings knows my idiosyncrasies. One of these is that I am extremely pained to see at a meeting a separate enclosure for *Antyajas*, and find it impossible to start my speech. But, as you have said, and many others besides you say, non-violence is the central creed guiding my life, and I am trying to act every moment in accordance with it. If what you have said is true, I can never wish to give you pain. I would not like you to do anything without knowing its implications, nor can I get angry with you and force you to do anything. Whatever I wish you to do, I should persuade you to do by touching your heart and reason. I, therefore, appeal to you to join me in wishing, if you believe that the practice of untouchability is a blot on Hinduism, that the wall which separates our *Antyaja* brethren from us should be demolished.

I do not mean that you should demolish that wall this very moment, or do anything that may create a disturbance in this meeting. I only want to ask you whether you agree with me. Do you wish that this wall should disappear and that our *Antyaja* sisters and brothers should take their seats with us?[2] It is only now that you have presented me an address. The manner in which you have framed your address and the fact of its being printed on [hand-made] paper or, maybe khadi, can have no value in my eyes, or only as much as you give by your daily conduct. The address, however, which you have presented to me this moment by removing the fencing [separating the *Antyajas* from the rest of the audience] will ever remain inscribed in my heart. I beg for another address like this from my Hindu sisters and brothers. I

[1] A village in Kaira District in Gujarat

[2] Many hands were raised in support, and only one against. The *Antyajas* then came and took their seats with the rest.

would not be pleased by your giving me a little yarn, or offering me flowers and fruits of various kinds and bringing an *Antyaja* girl to place a *tilak* on my forehead (as was done here). These I may have anywhere. But the gift you have made me just now should be accompanied with the chain of love; I want nothing less than that, for love is a part of non-violence, is comprehended in it.

My *sanatani*[1] friends should not please believe that I wish to strike a blow at Hindu society. I count myself as a *sanatani.* I know that my claim will be accepted by few, but that is my claim and I will continue to make it. I have said again and again that people are sure to admit, if not today after my death, that Gandhi was a *sanatani* Hindu. *Sanatani* means that which goes back to ancient times. My ideals are of this kind, that is, I find them in the oldest of books and try to live up to them; I am, therefore, justified in claiming myself to be a *sanatani.* I would not accept people as *sanatanis* merely because they can recite the Shastras in a beautiful manner. Those alone deserve to be called *sanatani* who have the spirit of Hinduism in every fibre of their being. The revered Shankara summarized that spirit in one sentence: *Brahma satyam jaganmithya.*[2] Another sage declared that there is no higher dharma than truth, and still another that Hinduism means perfect non-violence. You may accept any one of these three statements, and you will get the essence of Hinduism. They represent the very cream of the holy books of Hinduism, and I who claim to follow dharma as defined by them simply cannot wish to hurt anyone. I merely want you to mix with *Antyajas,* for they are also human beings. I want that we should serve them for they deserve our service. They render to society service which a mother gives to her child. To look upon them as untouchables and to despise them amounts to forgetting our humanity. Indians have become the pariahs of the world in this age because they look upon countless numbers of human beings as untouchables. This has resulted in the Muslims, too, being treated as untouchables, because of their association with us. What is the cause of this unhappy state of affairs? There is only one answer: "Reap as you sow" is a divine law. There is nothing mysterious in the fact that, through the world, God is dealing us this justice. It is perfect justice we are getting. "As men worship me, so I give myself to them"[3], so said Shri Krishna.

[1] Orthodox Hindus

[2] The *Brahman* alone is real; the phenomenal world is but an illusion.

[3] *Bhagavad Gita,* IV. 11.

If, therefore, you understand what I want from you, you will not be pained. I am not out to give pain to people. I am not asking too much from you. I have never asked you to enter into marriage ties with *Antyajas* or eat in their company. That is a matter of your own choice. But you cannot claim that to regard them as untouchables is also a matter of your choice. It cannot be a matter of your choice to avoid contact where you should not and not avoid it where you should. If you do not see the sufferings of *Antyajas*, how can you say *sarvam khalvidam Brahma*[1]? The author of that Upanishad was no hypocrite since he has ascertained that this entire universe is *Brahman*; we should be worse than brutes if we do not suffer when we see others suffer. Our dharma declares in the most emphatic terms that the brute, too, has a soul just as we have, but we have in this age distorted the teaching of that religion. Akha[2] described this idea [of anyone being defiled by the touch of another human being] as a superfluous limb. You should discard it, cut it off. I want you to destroy this evil of untouchability by arousing in you compassion and love, or, if you would have it so, a sense of brotherhood. If we end it, we shall win glory for Hinduism and will have saved it. I do not mean that *Antyajas* will then stop embracing Islam or Christianity. No religion depends for its survival on the numerical strength of its followers. There has been no more fallacious idea than that the strength of a religion depends on the number of those who profess it. Even if but one person remains a true Hindu, Hinduism will not perish; if, on the other hand, the crores of Hindus in the country adopt the ways of hypocrisy and evil, Hinduism will not live long but is certain to be destroyed. When I say Hinduism will be saved, I mean that we shall have atoned for our errors, paid the debt of centuries and escaped bankruptcy.

There is no doubt that the practice of untouchability is inspired by hatred. If anyone claims that he bears love for *Antyajas* though treating them as untouchables, I will not believe him. I see no evidence of love whatsoever in this practice. If we bore love for them, we would not address them insultingly, would not throw at them our left-overs; if we had love for them, we would hold them in reverence as we do our mothers, would provide them better wells and schools than what we ourselves have, and permit them to visit temples. All these would be indications of love. Love shines with the light of countless suns. If one little sun cannot

[1] "Verily, all this is *Brahman*."

[2] A Gujarati poet of the 17th century, famed for his satire; vedantist and rationalist

be hidden, how can love remain so? Does a mother ever have to declare that she loves her child? An infant which cannot even speak looks at its mother's eyes and, as their eyes meet, we see something mysterious passing between them.

Because I say this, let no one believe that a Hindu returned from South Africa with reformist ideas wants to impose his ideas on Hinduism. I can truthfully say that I entertain no ambition of reforming other people. I am a selfish man, immersed in my own joy. I seek my own spiritual welfare, and that is why I have been able to detach myself from everything and can live in complete peace. But I want you to feel the joy which I do and, therefore, ask you to welcome contact with *Antyajas*, to serve them and experience the happiness which you will get by doing so.

We can but garland the bride and the bridegroom. What more can we desire than to see them bound with the chain of love? What more can a person wish for than that he or she should be united to another who will be his or her life's partner? Anyone who desires more than this has no right to marry. I would not like anyone to marry in slavish obedience to rigid custom. If a girl faced with such a harsh necessity resolves to remain unmarried for her whole life and lead a life of self-sacrifice and voluntary suffering, if, like Uma, she takes a vow that she would marry only if she got a husband like Siva, she is bound to get such a husband, if not in this life in the next. Such a woman will be an ornament to her whole community. The purpose of marriage is not self-indulgence, but self-control. I want all people to understand this idea.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 15-2-1925

60. LEAVES FROM A DIARY[1]

Misses Angus and Hindsley were sent from Adyar to the Ashram by Dr. Besant to learn carding, spinning, etc., so as to be able to train others at Adyar. They passed a month at the Ashram and kept a diary of their daily experiences. On their departure they left relevant notes from their diary for publication in these pages. On first reading I thought I could not well

[1] Only Gandhiji's introductory remarks are reproduced here. The Diary appeared in *Young India* between February 12 and March 5.

publish them as they appeared to me to be too personal. The next thought was to cut out the personal references and then publish them. But on re-reading, I have decided to present the notes without a single alteration. I have stood the strain of personal reference now for a long time. I can very well bear the additional strain. There is a merit in the notes which compels publication. The references to the Ashram are not wholly true. All is not so rosy as it has appeared to these friends. The Ashram has its jars, it has its trials and difficulties, it has to wear away many a rough edge. But it does try to live up to its name. There are certainly things about the Ashram which can be copied with safety. But I must warn the reader against being carried away by some of the flattering description, and applying for admission. There is a standing notice from the Manager to me that he has more inmates than he can take care of and more work than he can cope with. Let those who like the way of life described by Misses Angus and Hindsley copy it wherever they may be.

Young India, 12-2-1925

61. NOTES

A Bihar Forecast

I take the following from a Bihar correspondent's letter[1]:

> There was a meeting of the Bihar P.C.C. . . . The programme for the whole year is to secure at least 13,000 self-spinning members. . . . The P.C.C. proposes this year to produce khaddar worth at least five lacs of rupees. The present monthly production is Rs. 13,000. If they are to manufacture five lacs, the monthly production must be trebled. Rajendra Babu[2] is enthusiastic about it. . . . The people here are anxiously looking forward to your visit. If you can come, the work will certainly receive a great push.

I hope that the other provinces too will lose no time in preparing their programme of work. I should love to go to Bihar as early as I can. But I am not master of my own movements. I go where fate takes me. It is therefore futile for me to make promises in advance.

[1] Only excerpts are reproduced here.

[2] Rajendra Prasad (1884-1963); statesman and scholar; chairman, Constituent Assembly of India, 1946-49; first President of India, 1950-62

AT CAWNPORE

Dr. Abdussamad writes:[1]

> Cawnpore was a scene of disturbance on the 2nd of this month and, as it is the venue of the next Congress, I think it is just proper that you may know the truth of the affair and if the statement is corroborated by Dr. Morarilal, the President of the local Congress Committee, I hope you will publish the whole or a part of it in your paper *Young India*. . . .

I have not written to Dr. Morarilal for confirmation of Dr. Abdussamad's statement as on the face of it, it appears to be colourless and innocent. If Dr. Morarilal has a different version of the incident related, I would gladly publish it. Quarrels will sometimes take place in best regulated societies but the spirit that prompted the parties after the incident seems to have been admirable. As for the charge against "a section of Arya Samajists" I do not know how far they will admit it. I can only hope that every section in Cawnpore will try its best to exercise the greatest self-restraint, keep under control the mischievous element and be ever ready to be charitable to rivals who may hold different political views or different faiths.

A SILENT WORKER

A Chittagong correspondent sends me the following story of a silent worker:

> Sreejut Kalisanker Chakrabartee, a silent but indefatigable worker of Chittagong, has, of late, arranged practical demonstrations of charkha. He does not believe in wordy battles. He personally approaches four families every morning with his big charkha, spins before them by way of giving first lesson and begs of them their contributions. The process may seem futile to some, but the melodious sound and sweet music of the charkha, preceded by the recitation of a prayer in the early hours of the day, wonderfully conquers the sceptic who orders a good charkha and promises due contributions. Uncompromising unbelievers who sneered at the charkha are daily won over. The business-like promptitude with which Kalisanker Babu is progressing, ensures success. He has set an example to other workers who may if they choose copy it with profit to themselves and the country.

I have taken the liberty of condensing the letter and making its English readable. I commend the letter to the attention of all workers. There is no doubt that example is better than precept.

Young India, 12-2-1925

[1] Only an excerpt is reproduced here.

62. A REVOLUTIONARY'S DEFENCE

A correspondent, who has given his name but not his address, has sent me what he calls "an open letter". It is a letter in reply to my remarks[1] on the revolutionary movement in my address to the Belgaum Congress. The letter breathes love of the country, fervour and a spirit of self-sacrifice. It is moreover written under a sense of wrong, said to have been done by me to the revolutionaries. I therefore gladly print the letter without the name. The address of the writer is not given. The following is the unchanged full text of the letter:[2]

> I think it my duty to remind you of the promise[3] you made some time back that you would retire from the political field at the time when the revolutionaries will once more emerge from their silence and enter into the Indian political arena. The experiment with the non-violent non-co-operation movement is now over. You wanted one complete year for your experiment, but the experiment lasted at least four complete years, if not five, and still do you mean to say that the experiment was not tried long enough?
>
> You are one of the greatest of personalities in the present age and under your direct guidance and inspiration, your programme was actually taken up for some reason or other by the best men in the land. Thousands of young men, the flower of the youth of our country, embraced your cult with all the enthusiasm they could gather. . . . Sacrifice and sincerity on the part of your followers were not wanting. . . . You wanted one crore of rupees and you got more than you wanted. . . . still do you mean to say that the experiment was not tried far enough? . . .
>
> To say that non-violent non-co-operation failed because the people were not sufficiently non-violent is to argue like a lawyer and not like a prophet. The people could not be more non-violent than they were during the last few years. . . .
>
> Non-violent non-co-operation movement failed not because there was sporadic outburst of suppressed feelings here and there but because the movement was lacking in a worthy ideal. The ideal that you preached was not in keeping with Indian culture and traditions. It savoured of imitation. . . . It was not the spirit of *kshama*[4] of the Indian *rishis,* it was

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXV, pp. 471-89.

[2] Only excerpts are reproduced here.

[3] In 1921, to retire if swaraj was not received within a year; *vide* Vol. XXI, pp. 557-9.

[4] Forgiveness

not the spirit of ahimsa of the great Indian yogis. It was an imperfect physical mixture of Tolstoyism and Buddhism and not a chemical mixture of East and West. You adopted the Western methods of Congress and Conferences and tried to persuade the whole nation to accept the spirit of ahimsa, irrespective of *desh*[1], *kal*[2] and *patra*[3] like Tolstoy, but which was a matter of individual *sadhana*[4] with the Indians. And above all, you were and are still vague as regards India's ultimate political goal. This is miserable. Your idea of independence is not in consistence with Indian ideals. India stands for *sarvam paravasham dukhham sarvam atmavasham sukham*[5] and for the ideal that individual existence is solely for the purpose of humanity and through humanity serving God. *Jagat-hitaya Srikrishnaya cha*[6]. The non-violence that India preaches is not non-violence for the sake of non-violence, but non-violence for the good of humanity, and when this good for humanity will demand violence and bloodshed, India will not hesitate to shed blood just in the same way as a surgical operation necessitates the shedding of blood. To an ideal Indian, violence or non-violence has the same significance provided they ultimately do good to humanity. *Vinashaya cha dushkrita*[7] was not spoken in vain.

To my mind therefore, the ideal that you gave to the nation or the programme of action that you laid before it is neither consistent with Indian culture nor practicable as a political programme.

It is simply inconceivable and incomprehensible to think that you still dare to entertain the slightest hope that England can be just and generous out of her free will—this England "which believes in Jallianwala Bagh massacres as a legitimate means of self-defence", this England which tried the O'Dwyer-Nair case and gave judgment in favour of barbarism. If you have an iota of faith left in you in the good sense of the British Government, then according to you where is the necessity of any programme at all? . . . A sovereign independent Indian Republic in alliance or in federation with the other independent nations of the earth is one thing, and self-governing India within this imperialistic British Empire is perfectly another thing. Your sentiment of remaining within the British Empire reminds one of the many Himalayan miscalculations that you have repeatedly committed. It seems to me that you have compromised a worthy ideal with the present needs of a false expediency and this is the reason that you have failed to capture the imagination of the

[1] Place; environment
[2] Time
[3] Recipient; the other person concerned
[4] Spiritual practice
[5] "All dependence is sorrow, all self-reliance is joy."
[6] "For the welfare of the world and for the sake of God." (*Pandava Gita*)
[7] "To destroy the wicked" (*Bhagavad Gita*, IV, 8)

youths of the country—youths who could dare and who are still daring to go against your wishes although they unhesitatingly recognize you as one of the greatest of personalities of the modern age. These are the Indian revolutionaries. They have now decided to remain silent no more and therefore they request you to retire from the political field or else to direct the political movement in a way so that it may be a help and not a hindrance to the revolutionary movement. . . . Further, I would like to point out that you have misjudged the revolutionaries in many respects when you blamed them in your recent presidential address in the 39th Congress. You said that the revolutionaries are retarding India's progress. I do not know what you mean by this word "progress". If you mean political progress then can you deny that every political progress that India has already made, however little that might be, has been made chiefly by the sacrifices and the efforts of the revolutionary party? Can you deny that the Bengal partition was annulled through the efforts of the Bengal revolutionaries? Can you doubt that the Morely-Minto reform was the outcome of the Indian revolutionary movement? Can you be blind to the forces of this revolutionary movement which was mainly though not wholly instrumental in bringing about the Montford reforms? . . . .

If you mean that these reforms are no index to true progress, then I would venture to say that this revolutionary movement has achieved no mean progress in the moral advancement of India. Indians were miserably afraid of death and this revolutionary party once more made the Indians realize the grandeur and the beauty that lie in dying for a noble cause. The revolutionaries have once again demonstrated that death has a certain charm and is not always a dreadful thing. To die for one's own beliefs and convictions, to die in the consciousness that by so dying one is serving God in the nation, to accept death or to risk one's life when there is every probability of death, for a cause which one honestly believes to be just and legitimate—is this no moral progress? . . .

You have said to the revolutionaries, "You may not care for your own lives, but you dare not disregard those of your countrymen who have no desire to die a martyr's death." But the revolutionaries are at a sad loss to understand the meaning of this sentence. Do you mean to say that the revolutionaries are responsible for the deaths of 70 men who were condemned in the Chauri Chaura trial? Do you mean to say that the revolutionaries are responsible for the bombing and killing of innocent people at Jallianwala Bagh and Gujranwala? Did the revolutionaries during their struggle for the last twenty years, in the past or in the present, ever asked the starving millions to take part in the revolutionary struggle? The revolutionaries have perhaps a better knowledge of the mass psychology than most of the present leaders. And this was the reason that they never wanted to deal with the masses until they

became sure of their own strength. They always believed that the masses of Northern India were ready for any emergency and they were also right in thinking the Northern India mass as a dense matter of high explosive, dangerous to be handled carelessly. It was you and your lieutenants who misjudged the sentiment of the masses and dragged them into the satyagraha movement, people who were groaning under a thousand oppressions from within and without, where the lightning of anger laid unperceived and you had to pay the penalty for it. But can you give any instance where the revolutionaries dragged unwilling souls into the valley of death?

But if you mean by the sentence that innocent people are being harassed, imprisoned and put to death due to the activities of the revolutionaries, then I would unhesitatingly and honestly admit, as far as my knowledge goes, that not a single individual was hanged who was innocent of any revolutionary activity, and about imprisonments and tortures, I may say that many innocent men were actually harassed and put to torture. But can the revolutionary party be made responsible for the atrocities committed by a foreign government? The foreign government is determined to crush any manifestation of manhood in the nation, in any form whatsoever; but in so crushing, the government is very liable to commit blunders and harass and imprison and put to torture cowards along with the heroes; but are the brave people to be blamed for the sufferings of the cowards? Moreover these sufferings cannot be termed as martyrs' death.

Lastly, I would like to say something about the remarks you have made in connection with the strength of the British Empire. You have said to the revolutionaries: "Those whom you seek to depose are better armed and infinitely better organized than you are." But is it not shameful that a handful of Englishmen are able to rule India, not by the free consent of the Indian people but by the force of the sword? And if the English can be well-armed and well-organized why can the Indians be not better armed and better organized still—Indians who are saturated with the high principles of spirituality? Indians are men in the same sense as the Englishmen are. Then, what on earth makes the Indians so helpless as to think that they can never be better organized than their English masters? By what argument and logic of fact can you disprove the possibilities in which the revolutionaries have immense faith? And the spirit of non-violence that arises out of this sense of helplessness and despair can never be the non-violence of the strong, the non-violence of the Indian *rishis*. This is *tamas*[1] pure and simple.

Excuse me Mahatmaji, if I am severe in criticizing your philosophy and principles. You have criticized the revolutionaries most unsympathetically and even you went so far as to describe them as the enemies of the

[1] Darkness; here, inaction due to helplessness

country, simply because they differ from your views and methods. You preach tolerance but you have been violently intolerant in your criticisms of the revolutionaries. The revolutionaries have risked their everything to serve their motherland, and if you cannot help them, at least be not intolerant towards them.

I never made any promise to anybody as to when and how I should retire from the political life of the country. But I did say and now repeat that I would certainly retire if I find that India does not imbibe my message *and* that India wants a bloody revolution. I should have no part in that movement because I do not believe in its utility either for India, or, which is the same thing, for the world.

I do believe that there was a wonderful response to the call of non-co-operation but I do also believe the success was more than proportionate to the measure of non-co-operation. The wonderful awakening of the masses is a standing demonstration of the fact.

I do believe too, that the country exercised great self-restraint; but I must reiterate my opinion that the observance of non-violence was far below the required standard.

I do not believe that "my philosophy" is an indifferent mixture of Tolstoy and Buddha. I do not know what it is except that it is what I feel to be true. It sustains me. I owe much to Tolstoy and much to Buddha. I still somehow or other fancy that "my philosophy" represents the true meaning of the teaching of the *Gita*. I may be totally mistaken. Such a mistake can do no harm either to me or to anybody. For the source of my inspiration is of no consequence if what I stand for be unadulterated truth.

Let the philosophy I represent be tested on its own merits. I hold that the world is sick of armed rebellions. I hold too that whatever may be true of other countries, a bloody revolution will not succeed in India. The masses will not respond. A movement in which masses have no active part can do no good to them. A successful bloody revolution can only mean further misery for the masses. For it would be still foreign rule for them. The non-violence I teach is active non-violence of the strongest. But the weekest can partake in it without becoming weaker. They can only be the stronger for having been in it. The masses are far bolder today than they ever were. A non-violent struggle necessarily involves construction on a mass scale. It cannot therefore lead to *tamas* or darkness or inertia. It means a quickening of the national life. That movement is still going on silently, almost imperceptibly but none the less surely.

I do not deny the revolutionary's heroism and sacrifice. But heroism and sacrifice in a bad cause are so much waste of splendid energy and hurt the good cause by drawing away attention from it by the glamour of the misused heroism and sacrifice in a bad cause.

I am not ashamed to stand erect before the heroic and self-sacrificing revolutionary because I am able to pit an equal measure of non-violent men's heroism and sacrifice untarnished by the blood of the innocent. Self-sacrifice of one innocent man is a million times more potent than the sacrifice of million men who die in the act of killing others. The willing sacrifice of the innocent is the most powerful retort to insolent tyranny that has yet been conceived by God or man.

I invite the attention of the revolutionaries to the three great hindrances to swaraj—the incomplete spread of the spinning-wheel, the discord between Hindus and Mussalmans and the inhuman ban upon the suppressed classes. I ask them patiently to take their due share in this work of patient construction. It may not be spectacular enough. But on that very account it requires all the heroic patience, silent and sustained effort and self-effacement of which the tallest among the revolutionaries is capable. Impatience will blur the revolutionary's vision and lead him astray. Slow and inglorious self-imposed starvation among the starving masses is every time more heroic than the death of the scaffold under false exaltation.

All criticism is not intolerance. I have criticized the revolutionary because I have felt for him. He has the same right to hold me to be in error as I believe him to be in error.

There are other points that are covered by the "open letter". But I have omitted to refer to them because I think that they can be easily answered by the reader and in no case do they touch the vital issue.

Young India, 12-2-1925

63. *SPEECH IN REPLY TO SEVA MANDAL ADDRESS, BHADRAN*

February 12, 1925

I have been asked to say something about *brahmacharya*[1]. This is one of those subjects on which I write in *Navajivan* from time to time. I rarely speak on it, because I think that it is an extremely difficult subject to talk about and one cannot explain one's ideas about it in a speech. You wish to hear my views on ordinary *brahmacharya* and not on *brahmacharya* in the extended definition of the term which connotes the control of all organs of sense. Even ordinary *brahmacharya* is said by the Shastras to be very difficult to observe. Permit me to say that there is ninety-nine per cent truth in this view, but that it falls short of absolute truth by one per cent. The observance of this ordinary *brahmacharya* is felt to be difficult because we do not strive to control the other organs of sense. The most important of these is the palate. For him who has learnt to control the palate, the observance of *brahmacharya* will be easy enough. Students of zoology tell us that lower creatures observe *brahmacharya* better than man. What they say is true, and if we try to know the reason we shall discover that the lower creatures have the completest control over the palate, which is not the result of an effort of will but is instinctive. They feed on grass and plants, and eat only as much as would satisfy their hunger. They eat to live, and do not live to eat. We do quite the opposite of this. The mother feeds her child all manner of delicacies, believing that only so can she express her love. By acting in this way, we do not make our food more tasty, but rather less so. Food is made tasty by appetite. A plain *rotla*[2] is more tasty to a hungry person than *ladu*[3] can be to a person who has no appetite. We actually use all kinds of spices and prepare an endless variety of dishes so that we may be able to load our stomachs to the full, and then we ask why we cannot observe *brahmacharya*. We let our eyes, which God has given us for seeing things, be tainted with lust, and do not learn to observe what we ought to. Why should a mother not learn the *Gayatri* and teach it to her child? It would

[1] Literally, living in the *brahman*, the absolute. In ordinary usage, the term has come to signify celibacy.

[2] A round, thick, flat cake made of the flour of *bajri*, a coarse millet

[3] A sweet ball

be enough if, without going into its deeper meaning, she merely understands that it is an invocation to the Sun-god and teaches the child to worship the Sun. *Sanatanists* and Arya Samajists, both may worship the Sun. In explaining the *Gayatri* as worship of the Sun, I have given its most obvious meaning. What is the meaning of this worship? It means that, holding up our heads and looking at the Sun we should cleanse our eyes. The author of the *Gayatri* was a *rishi*, a seer. He tells us that nowhere shall we find anything to equal the drama of sunrise or see beauty and mystery like its. There is no *sutradhara*[1] as skilled as God and no stage grander than the sky. But which mother ever asks her child to look at the sky, for fear that the child might hurt its eyes? Her mind is filled with all manner of worldly thoughts; the education which they give in that big building, she perhaps tells herself, will make her child a well-paid officer. Does she ever ask herself, however, how much the child benefits from what it learns, consciously or unconsciously, from the atmosphere in the home? Parents pad their children with clothes till they feel suffocated, try to make them look smart and handsome, but do the children really look so? Clothes are meant to cover the body, not to beautify it; they are meant to protect us against heat and cold. We should ask a child shivering with cold to go and warm itself at the stove, or sun in the street or go and work on the farm; then alone can we help it build a body as strong as steel. Anyone who has observed *brahmacharya* ought to have a body of such strength. We, on the contrary, ruin children's bodies. We wish to keep them within the four walls of the home and make them comfortable. This produces a kind of artificial heat in their skin which we can only compare to eczema. We have ruined our bodies by pampering them overmuch, we have been playing with fire.

So much about clothes. Then, through the things we talk about in the home we produce harmful effects on a child's mind. We talk about marrying the boy or the girl, and the things which the child sees around it have much the same effect on its mind. What surprises me is that we have not yet become the most uncivilized people on the earth. Despite everything calculated to destroy decent social restraints, they have survived. God has so made man that, though placed again and again in circumstances which might tempt him to evil, he comes out safe—so profound is His mystery. If we eliminate all such factors which increase the

[1] The producer in Sanskrit drama, who appears as a character in the beginning of the play and introduces its theme

difficulties in the way of *brahmacharya*, we would find it quite easy to observe.

Though this is our condition, we wish to oppose others with physical force. There are two ways in which we can make ourselves fit to do this, a lower and a higher. The lower way is to cultivate strength of body by any means whatever, by eating and drinking anything which may serve our purpose, training ourselves for physical fighting, eating beef, and so on. When I was a boy, a friend used to tell me that we ought to eat meat, that if we did not we would never be as strong and stout as Englishmen. The poet Narmadashanker[1] also gave this advice in a poem of his. The lines, "The Englishman rules and the Indian is content to submit" and "The foreigner is full six feet tall" are intended to suggest this very idea. Narmadashanker has rendered great service to Gujarat but there were two phases in his life, the first of self-indulgence and the second of self-control. This particular poem belongs to the period of self-indulgence. In Japan too, when they found it necessary to fight other countries beef-eating became common. If, therefore, we wish to cultivate physical strength the lower way, we shall have to start eating such things.

But *brahmacharya* is the only means for us if we would cultivate physical strength the higher way. I feel pity for myself when I hear people describing me as a man of inviolate *brahmacharya*. I have been so described in the address presented to me. I must tell you, therefore, that the person who drafted the address does not know who may be called a man of inviolate *brahmacharya*. Didn't he ask himself how a man like me, married and having several children, could be so described? A man of inviolate *brahmacharya* would never get fever, not even so much as headache, he would never have an attack of bronchitis or appendicitis. Doctors say that appendicitis may even result from an orange seed sticking in the intestines. But the seed will never be retained inside if one's body is clean and healthy. When the intestines have lost their tone, they cannot eliminate such things in the natural course. My intestines also must have lost their tone and so I might have failed to assimilate something which I swallowed. Children often swallow similar things, but their mothers seldom take serious notice of that. The reason [why no harmful effects follow] is that their intestines have the natural strength to eliminate such things. I do not, therefore, want anyone to become a hypocrite by attributing to me the observance of inviolate *brahmacharya* [and following my

[1] Also called Narmad, the first poet of the new age in Gujarat.

example]. The power and light of inviolate *brahmacharya* are far greater than what I can boast of. I am not perfect in my *brahmacharya,* though it is true that I strive to be so. I have only placed before you a few observations from my experience which indicate how one may erect a protecting hedge [to preserve one's *brahmacharya*]. Observing *brahmacharya* does not mean that one may not touch any woman, not even one's sister. It means that one's mental state must be such that touching a woman would disturb one no more than touching a piece of paper. If, in order to preserve my *brahmacharya,* I must guard against touching my sister to nurse her when she is ill, that *brahmacharya* is worth no more than the dust under our feet. We would be perfect in our *brahmacharya* if, even when touching a young and extremely beautiful woman, we are disturbed no more than when we touch a corpse. If you wish your children to be capable of such *brahmacharya,* you cannot prescribe their studies but should let a man like me, imperfect though he be in his *brahmacharya,* do that.

A man who observes *brahmacharya* is a sannyasi by nature. The stage of *brahmacharya* is superior to that of *sannyasa*[1], but we have corrupted it and in the result the stage of active life as a householder and that of retired life have lost their beauty, to speak nothing of the stage of *sannyasa*—such is our plight.

If we follow the lower path indicated above, we shall not, even after five hundred years, be strong enough to fight the Pathans. If we can follow the higher path today, then we can meet them this very day, for the inward change required by that path can take place in no time, whereas change in our physical constitution will require ages to bring about. We shall be able to follow that higher path only if we have earned holy merit in our previous lives and if our parents equip us for the purpose.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 1-3-1925

[1] Complete renunciation, the last stage of life

64. SPEECH AT VIRSAD

February 12, 1925

Look at the marvel that is God! What for was I invited and what for have I come? Kashibhai[1] has decided that no unnecessary expenses should be incurred on the wedding of Dahyabhai[2] and Yashoda. For that he has brought down on himself the anger of his relatives. Let me serve notice on all the rich men who have fortunes to spend on weddings that they should send all that money to me, I will put it to good use. Money spent on ostentation is not well spent. We are going the wrong way. As a result, for one in the *Patidar* community to have a daughter has become a torture hard to bear. When Kashibhai said that he would have an inexpensive wedding, we all agreed. I seek your approval also. Pray silently within yourself that you should have the strength to perform weddings with simplicity and in a religious spirit.

I need not thank you for your address. Nor would you expect it. You have mentioned khadi and charkha in your address. If it is true that khadi has divine power, if the charkha has the power to win us swaraj and if it is a true *sudarshan chakra*[3], then all of you should have made khadi your own. Otherwise presenting such addresses, praising khadi and the charkha and making girls sing on the occasion, serve no purpose.

Why are the *Antyajas* in the meeting sitting at the back? I bow to them. I take pride in calling myself an *Antyaja*. I have often said that if I am born again, I wish to be born an *Antyaja*. At present I do not serve them—but I am making atonement and purifying myself. I wish to ask of Hindu society "Do you want to cast me out just as you cast out the *Antyajas*?" Even though I am a non-*Antyaja* at present, I cannot say that I follow all the injunctions in thought, word and action. My prayer is that if I be reborn I should be a *purnapurusha*[4] and that in an *Antyaja* family. It is not the mark of a Kshatriya to make them sit at the back. *Patidars* are a brave community. They have many good qualities as well as a few bad ones. But there is none in this world who is

[1] Dahyabhai's father-in-law

[2] Sardar Patel's son

[3] The celebrated discus of Krishna

[4] The perfect person in Vedanta

without good qualities and none without bad. None of us is a true *Purushottama*[1]. That would be most unlikely in the *Kaliyug*. I can't therefore think of the *Antyajas* as low. It is much better to live among them and be untouchable than to live with you and be touchable. I have to seek forgiveness in the court of God. He will tell me that, if I consider them untouchables, they will give me a slap on my face; because I am guilty of the sin of treating my brothers as beasts. Kshatriyas do not retrace their steps. Keeping the *Antyajas* backward is retracing one's steps. I tell you this lest you should do wrong by keeping the *Antyajas* backward. I tell you this because attempts are being made to hide the *adharma*[2].

Patidars tyrannize over lower communities, beat them and exact forced labour from them. I know that this is true. Dread such conduct. If you persist in it, your courage would ebb away. One who is happy should try to make others happy. It is our duty to bear hardships and make the world happy. It is devilish to make others unhappy while we enjoy our pleasures. It is not your address I want. I want rather that you should make your *Antyaja* brothers happy and by so doing be happy yourselves.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 158-60

65. *TELEGRAM TO SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI*

PETLAD,
February 13, 1925

SIR PRABHASHANKER
BHAVNAGAR

YOUR LETTER. RAJKOT SUNDAY TO WEDNESDAY. PROGRAMME THEREAFTER TO BE FIXED RAJKOT. REACHING ASHRAM TONIGHT.

GANDHI

From a photostat: C.W. 3192. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

[1] Supreme Being; a name of Krishna; here, a perfect man
[2] Opposite of dharma

66. SPEECH AT PALEJ

February 13, 1925

We must develop fearlessness at the end of a war and, by doing constructive work, acquire the capacity to plan and execute. If we do not have the latter, our independence cannot be preserved. If we secure swaraj through non-violence, it can be preserved through service. If we want swaraj for the sake of power it can be retained only through violence. It is worthwhile to foster the strength of non-violence and give up the strength that comes from power. As long as we do not have the strength to live together, swaraj cannot be won through non-violence. That is why I placed before the public a threefold programme.

We can do anything in the name of religion but, when we realize that it is *adharma*, we cannot persist in doing that. To me untouchability is more unethical than slavery. When the movement for ending untouchability was going on here, there was a suggestion that Christians should take part in it. But I objected to it. An honest Christian like George Joseph[1] wanted to enrol himself for this work in Vykom but I had said "No" to him. If we go to the whole world for help, our work may become more complicated.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, p. 160

67. ABOUT STUDENTS

A friend writes:[2]

I have often acknowledged the sacrifices made by students. But it is a universal rule admitting of no exception that the world does not take note of the sacrifices of those who themselves proclaim their sacrifices, for that is no sacrifice which has to be proclaimed by the person making it. Sacrifice speaks for itself. Would it not be

[1] Barrister of Madurai; edited *Young India* and *The Independent* for some time

[2] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had referred to the sacrifices made by students of the Gujarat Vidyapith and the hardships they suffered for want of employment, and requested Gandhiji to persuade Indian States to give preference to *snatakas* in their services.

better if the students thought of what they had gained, rather than of what they had sacrificed?

Anyone who does not know that national education is of value in itself does not know what it is. *Snatakas* need not believe that the value of the graduates of national universities has now gone down. Why should they themselves reduce their value by believing so? I would expect these graduates to have full confidence in themselves. Let them not behave as beggars without self-respect. They should have faith in God. Do they want me to beg before the Rulers of Indian States? Why should they not enhance their value by their own knowledge and strength of character? We should hope for a time when employers themselves would demand graduates of national universities. It is for *snatakas* to hasten such a time. A diamond lying among pieces of glass cannot long remain undetected. That should be the condition of national graduates. In my speeches in Kathiawar, I do not wish to utter a single word about *snatakas*. I am going there in the hope of being able to spread the use of khadi and the spinning-wheel, to convert the Rulers and the authorities of the States to love of khadi. I am going there so that I may request the Rulers to think of their duty. If the value of khadi and the spinning-wheel comes to be better recognized, that of national graduates is bound to rise, for those among them who have not fully mastered the science of spinning do not deserve to be called national graduates. I am going to Kathiawar in the hope of being able to create an atmosphere in which people would require the services of experts in spinning in the same way that State officers formerly required the services of secretaries proficient in English.

Having said this, I beg leave of my correspondent to correct a few of his errors. It is not true, as he believes, that a non-co-operating student cannot suspend non-co-operation as others have done. The painful and humiliating truth is that thousands of students who had joined non-co-operation have returned, and more are returning, to co-operation, that some *snatakas*, whom we had taken to be non-co-operators, have appeared at examinations controlled by the Government though they had obtained national diplomas. As against this, some lawyers had their *sanads*[1] cancelled by the courts and are forced to be among non-co-operators. Some others, moreover, who were in Government service and resigned their posts are truly in a pitiable condition, but they do not feel that way and are as happy as kings, for though enjoying the bene-

[1] Practising licences

fits of Government service they were slaves then, and are free now though without those benefits. For this reason, they regard themselves as fortunate.

I, therefore, ask those students who are overcome with despair to see that they have no reason to lose heart; on the contrary, they have brighter prospects before them. Of course, this is subject to one condition. The general impression about non-co-operating students is that they should be upright, fearless, self-controlled, hard-working and patriotic. Students who possess these qualities will have no reason any time to lose heart. The salvation of the country depends on them. They will be the foundation on which the golden temple of the Goddess of Freedom will be raised.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-2-1925

68. *MY NOTES*

A Correction

I said in the last issue that I would declare open a national school at Rajkot. The auspicious ceremony, however, is to be performed by the Thakore Saheb. That had always been the intention of the workers and in case the Thakore Saheb was not available I would be there to perform the ceremony. Having had no telegram or definite information on this point, I assumed that I would have to do the job. I was in Delhi, touring, and I wrote the note in question from there. I was happy to find, on my return to Ahmedabad, that the opening ceremony would be performed by the Thakore Saheb. This, of course, is the most proper arrangement.

An Example to Follow

Hulyal is a town in Karnatak. The Secretary of the taluk [Congress] Committee there writes as follows:[1]

This Municipality deserves compliments. If, besides doing the work described above, it pays attention to the civic needs of the town, keeps the public tank clean and sees to it that cattle do not wallow in it while quenching their thirst, and men and women do not bathe and wash clothes in the very same tank, and if it provides

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had given details of the measures taken by the Municipality of the town, which had a majority of nationalist councillors, to promote the constructive programme.

pure and cheap milk for children, then it must be regarded as a model municipality. If its example is followed by all other municipalities it requires no effort to see that our problems would be solved and the level of public life would rise very high.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-2-1925

69. *SPEECH IN REPLY TO WELCOME ADDRESS, RAJKOT*[1]

[February 15, 1925][2]

As I entered the Darbargadh today my memory went back to an incident of my childhood which happened on this very spot and which I have treasured all these years. It was customary in those days, on the occasion of a royal wedding, to send a deputation to bridal States, before the wedding took place. The sons of the minister would form part of the deputation. My father who was then minister, however, had made it a point never to send his boys on such occasions. At the time which I am recalling today, deputations were to go to Kanpur and Dharampur. My father, of course, kept us back. My good mother, who was more worldly and did not want her children to be robbed of the prizes of position, pressed my brother and me to go to the late Thakore Saheb and cry before him. When he asked us what we were after, we were to tell him that we wanted to go to Dharampur. We followed the advice and we were sent not to Dharampur but Kanpur. Today also I must cry to conquer. I shall cry not for name and fame or wealth and position. Fame, said the *shastris*[3] who blessed me, was ever a virgin inasmuch as she failed to find a suitable match for her, and they wished that that coy damsel should at last wed with me. May she ever remain "in single blessedness". For I am sure that were she to marry me I would be undone. I cry not, therefore, for fame, but one or two things you have withheld from me.

[1] This was Mahadev Desai's summary of Gandhiji's speech delivered in reply to an address given to him by the Representative Assembly of Rajkot and handed over by the Thakore Saheb. The address eulogized Gandhiji's services in the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity.

[2] From *Navajivan*, 22-2-1925

[3] Those well-versed in the scriptures

I am thankful for all the kind things you have said about me, and more for the kinder sentiment expressed by the Thakore Saheb. I wish I was worthy of them. I do not for a moment flatter myself with the belief that I am all I have been described to be. I am one of the people and want to continue as such. Let me pray that I may remain untouched by the honour you have done me.

Whilst, then, I thank you I must register my complaint about one or two things. You have omitted all mention of that in the address, whether purposely or not I do not know. You have rightly mentioned truth and non-violence as my guiding principles. I would indeed be a lifeless corpse without those two life-principles. But I am surprised that you have studiously omitted all reference to the two things, pursuit of which is inseparable from the practice of truth and non-violence. I refer to khaddar and removal of untouchability. These two things are in a manner more important than Hindu-Muslim unity, for that unity is impossible without them. So long as we have not rid Hinduism of the stain of untouchability, it is impossible to achieve real Hindu-Muslim unity.

A very thoughtful Mussalman once told me that so long as there was untouchability in Hinduism it was difficult for Mussalmans to entertain any regard for that faith or its followers. I have repeated times without number that an "untouchable" community is unknown to the Shastras. The weaver and the scavenger are not classed as untouchables by the Shastras. I am both. My mother was certainly a scavenger inasmuch as she cleaned me when I was a child. But she did not, on that account, become an untouchable. Why then should a *Bhangi*, who renders similar necessary service, be regarded as untouchable? Even if the whole world of *shastris* were to be against me I would proclaim from the housetops that they are wrong in considering untouchability to be part of the Hindu religion.

And in this connection I take leave to mention one thing that both pleased and pained me. I was glad to notice that the *shastris'* blessings was the first item of today's programme. But I wondered whether there was a false ring about them. Their praise meant endorsement of my work on untouchability. Did they approve of my activity about it or did they merely obey the presumed or declared will of the Thakore Saheb that they should bless me? The benediction rang untrue because of the omission in your address of my campaign against untouchability. I beseech you, Thakore Saheb, to be kind to them, to befriend the depressed people of your State, even as Rama of old befriended Shabari and

Guha, both presumably untouchables. I ask you to ensure them admission into schools, temples and all public places.

I was distressed to find the boy scouts clad in foreign khaki. I did expect that these at least would be clad in khaddar. If you have khaddar uniforms for your boy scouts and your Police you can relieve the misery of the poor, the untouchables and the indigent widow. I entreat you, therefore, Thakore Saheb and members of the Representative Assembly, to resolve to wear khaddar and to have khaddar uniforms for all the State employees. You have given me a rich casket. I have no strong-room nor safe to keep it in. Nor have I men to keep charge of the strong-room or the safe, if I had them. I have thus to hand over all such costly presents to friends like Jamnalal Bajaj to take care of them for public use. But I have room enough to store khaddar and I therefore beg khaddar of everyone I meet; I would not hesitate to ask even Lord Reading to dress himself and his orderly in khaddar.

Your sword, worthy ruler, is a mighty symbol. Your path is like your sword's edge, you may not depart by even a hair's breadth from the straight and narrow path of truth. It is an eternal reminder of the fact that in your State there should be not a single drunkard, and no impure man or woman. It is your duty to put strength where there is weakness and cleanliness where there is dirt. Befriend the poor and the oppressed. Your sword is not meant for others' necks, it is meant for your own. You can tell your people that the moment you exceed the bounds of your authority they may put you to the sword. I speak in these terms to you as I owe a duty to you, Thakore Saheb. Your father made my father an unconditional gift of some land. I have thus eaten your salt and I should not be worth the salt, if I did not on this solemn occasion invite your attention to what are a prince's obvious duties. The honour you have done me lays me under a deep debt of gratitude. I prize the relief of the poor and the oppressed and the untouchables more than all that honour. Tell me that you have introduced numerous spinning-wheels in your villages and schools, that you have introduced khaddar in all your departments, and that all your public institutions and places are thrown open to the untouchables, and I shall feel doubly honoured and in reverence bow down my head to you. May God bless you with strength to serve your people.

Young India, 26-2-1925

70. *SPEECH AT OPENING OF NATIONAL SCHOOL, RAJKOT*

February 15, 1925

This school, or rather the Vidyapith from which it has sprung, is a part of the great experiment which is at present being conducted in the country. Durbars and Indian States rarely undertake an experiment of this kind. Their general inclination is to follow the royal path. We shall hardly find any State which would think of abandoning this path and venturing upon experiments. It is for the people, not their rulers, to undertake experiments. Rulers are the protectors and representatives of their subjects. If I may go further, I would say that a real king is the servant of his subjects. He cannot, therefore, conduct experiments at their cost. From that point of view, the Thakore Saheb was right in what he said regarding teachers, but people like me who have spent their whole lives in making experiments cannot follow any other course. I would, therefore, pray to the Thakore Saheb to look kindly on us. If the rules intended for the teachers of a country which aspires to be free, that is, to be self-controlled, are not very strict, we shall find it difficult to get teachers of even moderate quality for the ordinary schools.

I would tell the teachers that they should always be ready to face difficulties, and should follow the path of dharma till the very end. No matter if the number of students goes down from 150 to 40, they should continue to serve the school. It is their faith which will give a magnetic quality to the school and attract more students in the future. It is said that we are always brave in the beginning, but, when difficulties come, instead of praying to the God of mercy we abandon the task, the egotists that we are. If we examine the history of nations, we shall see that among people who enjoy freedom there have been countless men and women who had remained loyal to their principles at the cost of their lives. It does not matter if the school makes no progress, not merely for five years but for twenty years. In the history of a school twenty years mean nothing. Whether or no we see any tangible results, if the teachers have faith in themselves they should follow what seems to them the most straightforward path; they are bound, in the end, to see the coast.

It is necessary to say a few words about the distinctive features of this school. One is that it has decided to admit *Antyajas* in the face

of many difficulties, and another that it has given the highest importance to bodily labour. Its teachers and pupils have had a share in the labour behind the greenery we see on its grounds. Such bodily labour is a form of *yajna*. In this age, however, the best *yajna* for this country consists in spinning. Every man and woman should give half an hour daily to the spinning-wheel for the sake of the country, for the sake of the *Antyajas*, of the countless poor and the numberless widows. The parents should realize that their children ought to cultivate not only their intellect but also their bodies, should learn not merely to serve their own interests but also to work for public good. Those who see that the spinning-wheel advances public good, will never abandon it. I hear, on the contrary, that parents do not like their children to do bodily work, they do not like them to spin. True knowledge consists in a harmonious development of the body, the intellect and the soul. Our highest welfare lies in cultivating all the three. Ours is a country in which even self-sacrificing and hard-working teachers will lose heart. I pray to the Thakore Saheb that he should look kindly on teachers living in such an atmosphere.

Does the school violate any moral principles? If it does, the position of course would be different. Maybe some will think that the issue of untouchability involves a moral principle; those parents who think that contact with *Antyajas* defiles us need not send their children to this school. I will then pray to God to open my eyes if I was in the wrong, or to vouchsafe that the parents should give up their obstinacy if they are in the wrong.

I shall say in conclusion that this school will not prosper through the sympathetic interest of the Thakore Saheb or through the efforts of the parents, nor will it prosper because of my efforts or Vallabhbhai's or through the promise of help by the none too flourishing Vidyapith. Everything will depend on the teachers. I do not believe that money alone can help any institution. If it could, the Hardinge School in Calcutta would not have had to be closed. It did not succeed because it did not get sincere workers to breathe life into it, such as an institution of its kind requires. You should aspire to give life to this school and should start work with God's name on your lips. Those who regard themselves as weak as women and work with God's name on their lips, who turn to God with Draupadi's piteous cry[1] for help, will need neither the

[1] An allusion to the incident in the *Mahabharata*, where Dusshasana attempted to disrobe Draupadi but her honour was saved by God providing her an endless sari

Thakore Saheb's support nor the Vidyapith's assistance. If, therefore, it becomes necessary to close the school, the blame will be entirely the teachers'.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 1-3-1925

71. SPEECH AT OPENING OF JAIN STUDENTS' HOSTEL, RAJKOT

February 15, 1925

The Thakore Saheb expounded fine ideas about education, but was pessimistic about being able to put them into effect in a small State like this. But there is no justification for his pessimism. In fact a State enjoys many advantages in being small. The people of Rajkot are such that it should be easy to win their co-operation. The smaller countries of Europe, like Sweden, Norway and Switzerland—countries about which the world has not heard much because they were not involved in the last War—boast a civilization in no way inferior to that of the bigger countries; they have carried out many successful experiments in the field of education. The problems of big countries are also big. I can well understand what difficulties a person in the position of Lord Reading generally has to contend with. With so many parties and interests to consider, and the field of work so large, what effective work can be done? It is, therefore, only in small countries that promising plans can be easily implemented. The Gujarat Vidyapith has been, in a way, doing what the Thakore Saheb explained. If we run one model institution with ideal students, many more institutions of the same kind will grow out of it. A zero can produce nothing, for it cannot be multiplied, whereas one can grow into many. There is, therefore, no cause for despair. The cause of despair generally lies in the man himself. The *atman* is its own friend and its own enemy.[1] We may not put any limits to what human effort can achieve. There can be any such limits only if we can see above us any obstruction to upward flight. For rising the sky is the only limit. There is a limit to how low we can fall. God Himself has created such limit in the form of land, rock, water, etc. Hence we need not despair. I advise the people to take the fullest advantage of the Ruler, and should like to say to the latter that he has done much, but much more needs to be done.

[1] A reference to the *Bhagavad Gita*, VI. 5

The Ruler and the subjects should develop the completest mutual understanding and confidence. If it is true to say "As the Ruler, so the subjects", it is equally true to say "As the subjects, so the Ruler". If you yourselves do nothing, however much the Ruler may wish to help, he, too, can do nothing. If you let hypocrisy, flattery and wickedness govern your lives, the Ruler's life is bound to mirror those evils. I have to mention this because the saying, "Salt is better even than honey", is still true.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 1-3-1925

72. TELEGRAM TO C. F. ANDREWS

JETPUR,
February 16, 1925

ANDREWS
CARE JEHANGIR PETIT
MOUNT PETIT
PEDDAR ROAD
BOMBAY

UP TO EIGHTEENTH RAJKOT. NINETEENTH PORBUNDER. TWENTY-FIRST WADHWAN. TWENTY SECOND ASHRAM. LOVE.

MOHAN

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

73. TELEGRAM TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA

JETPUR,
February 16, 1925

MALAVIYAJI
BIRLA HOUSE
DELHI

GETTING COPIES FOR YOU. HOPE YOU HAVE BEEN RAWALPINDI.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

74. *VYKOM SATYAGRAHA*

Here is a letter from a Vykom satyagrahi:

> Your kind card to hand. The Travancore Legislative Council yesterday voted by 22 against 21 against the right of entry to the Vykom temple road for which purpose satyagraha is now being offered. Naturally people here are very much agitated and feel aggrieved all the more, because the voting was gained by the direct pressure brought by the Government on the voters. I am ashamed to say, one member of the depressed and prohibited classes himself voted against the entry and sided with the Government. The situation hereafter is fraught with all kinds of difficulties. There is very little enthusiasm now for the peaceful methods of satyagraha. Some have already begun to advocate "direct action" and even forcible entry into temples. Small-pox has broken out in the Satyagraha Camp itself and with the growing heat of the advancing summer it may attack more and more. We are carrying the struggle with faith in your leadership and gospel of non-violence. But I am afraid the Provincial Congress Committee of Kerala is waning in its enthusiasm. They have collected very little money during the last many months by their own efforts. For everything we depend on your own esteemed help and advice. We are hard up for money. All satyagrahis are anxiously awaiting your forthcoming visit which would, it is needless to say, be of inestimable help to our cause.

It is a good letter because it is a frank letter. I am unable to congratulate the Travancore Government, if the facts are as stated. But I do not know them. I therefore suspend my judgment till I know them first hand. I am eager to visit Vykom at the earliest possible date. I hope that it will not be long.

Meanwhile, satyagrahis must not be dejected. They dare not give way to despair. Of all my Tamil lessons one proverb at least abides with me as an evergreen. Its literal meaning is, "God is the only Help for the helpless". The grand theory of satyagraha is built upon a belief in that truth. Hindu religious literature, indeed all religious literature, is full of illustrations to prove the truth. The Travancore Durbar may have failed them. I may fail them. But God will never fail them, if they have faith in Him. Let them know that they are leaning on a broken reed if they are relying on me. I am living at a safe distance from them. I may wipe their tears, but suffering is their sole privilege. And victory will surely come out of their sufferings provided they are

pure. God tries His votaries through and through, but never beyond endurance. He gives them strength enough to go through the ordeal He prescribes for them. For the satyagrahis of Vykom their satyagraha is not a mere experiment to be given up if it does not succeed within a prescribed time or after a prescribed force of suffering. There is no time limit for a satyagrahi nor is there a limit to his capacity for suffering. Hence there is no such thing as defeat in satyagraha. Their so-called defeat may be the dawn of victory. It may be the agony of birth.

The Vykom satyagrahis are fighting a battle of no less consequence than that of swaraj. They are fighting against an age-long wrong and prejudice. It is supported by orthodoxy, superstition, custom and authority. Theirs is only one among the many battles that must be fought in the holy war against irreligion masquerading as religion, ignorance appearing in the guise of learning. If their battle is to be bloodless, they must be patient under the severest trials. They must not quail before a raging fire.

The Congress Committee may give them no help. They may get no pecuniary help, they may have to starve. Their faith must shine through all these dark trials.

Theirs is "direct action". They dare not be irritated against their opponents. They know no better. They are not all dishonest men as satyagrahis are not all honest men. They are resisting what they honestly believe to be an encroachment upon their religion. The Vykom satyagraha is the argument of suffering. The hardest heart and the grossest ignorance must disappear before the rising sun of suffering without anger and without malice.

I am alarmed at the appearance of small-pox in the satyagraha camp. It is a disease born of filth and yields to hygienic treatment. They must isolate small-pox patients and discover the cause of the disease. Is their camp in a perfectly sanitary condition? Doctors have no medicine for small-pox. Water cure is the best cure. Low diet or no diet is the safest. Let the patients have copious draughts of pure water. Above all neither the patients nor the others should lose nerve. The disease is also a course of suffering. Soldiers' camps are not free from disease. Indeed it has been ascertained that more soldiers die of disease than of bullet wounds.

For finance, they need not worry. Their faith will bring them all the pecuniary aid they may need. I know of no good cause that has died for want of funds.

Young India, 19-2-1925

75. *HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION*

A correspondent writes:

> You have entertained in the columns of *Young India* an attempt made by one of your correspondents to show up the shibboleth of the Muslims' extreme backwardness in education. That emboldens me, if you will permit an humble worker in the country's cause, to put before you one more of these shibboleths which has been ruling our political life for long, but which is palpably more absurd than the one as regards Muslim backwardness to which I am glad your attention has at last been drawn.
>
> "The Muslims are a minority in India." How often is such a statement made, and how many times more is it tacitly assumed in political argument! But are they really a minority? Even taking one sect of them, viz., the Sunni Henafi, for comparison, do we not find that it is numerically stronger by far than *any* single community amongst the Hindus, or even than each of the other religious groups in India, as the Christians, Parsis, Sikhs, Jains, Jews and Buddhists? And is it not the case that the Hindus are divided into communities and sects which are in most cases farther apart from one another socially than the Muslims are from the non-Muslims? Then, what about the Hindu untouchables? Is not their number equal to, if not greater than, that of the Muslim "minority"? If Muslims as "a minority" in India may claim separate and special treatment, protection and guarantees, how much stronger must the claim of this untouchable section of Hindus be allowed to be, since they not only are by their numbers as important a "minority"—and a claimant one too, since the date of the Lucknow Pact[1],—but have been suffering for ages from *actual present disabilities* with which no Muslim or any other touchable minority's *apprehensions for the future* may possibly bear comparison? As witness the Vykom satyagraha, the Palghat dispute, the Bombay "lynchers". I leave alone the innumerable backward castes and the aborigines so far reckoned within the Hindu fold. Are the Muslims then **the** minority?

The italics and the black types are the writer's. I have given the letter for its undoubted earnestness. And yet to me, an observer untouched, I hope, by any bias one way or the other, the reasoning appears to be specious when it is used to demonstrate that the Mussalmans are not a minority in India. The writer forgets

[1] The joint scheme of reforms adopted by the Indian National Congress and Muslim League at their sessions in Lucknow in 1916

that the claim is that of all Mussalmans against all Hindus. The latter cannot both have the cake and eat it. Though divided among themselves, the Hindus do present a more or less united front not only to the Mussalmans but to all non-Hindus, even as the Mussalmans though divided among themselves present naturally a united front to all non-Muslims. We shall never solve the question by ignoring facts or re-arranging them to suit our plans. The facts are that the Mussalmans are seven crores against twenty-two crores of Hindus. The latter have never denied it. Let us also know the issues. A minority does not always fear a majority because it is a majority. The Mussalmans fear the Hindu majority because the Hindus, they say, have not always treated them with justice, have not respected their religious prejudices and because, they say, the Hindus are superior to them in education and wealth. Whether these are facts or not is irrelevant for our purpose. It is enough that Mussalmans believe them and therefore are afraid of the Hindu majority. The Mussalmans expect to meet this fear only partially by means of separate electorates and special representation even in excess of their number in some cases. The Hindus admit the Mussalman minority but deny the Mussalman charge of injustice. This must therefore be verified. I have not known Hindus to deny the statement that they are superior to Mussalmans in education and wealth.

The Hindus on their part fear the Mussalmans because they (the Hindus) say that Mussalmans whenever they have held power have treated them with great harshness and contend that though they were in a majority they were non-plussed by a handful of Mussalman invaders, that the danger of a repetition of the experience is ever present before the Hindus, and that in spite of the sincerity of the leading Mussalmans the Mussalman masses are bound to make common cause with any Mussalman adventurer. The Hindus therefore reject the plea of weakness on the part of the Mussalmans and refuse to entertain the idea of extending the doctrine of the Lucknow Pact. It is again beside the question whether the Hindu fear is justified. The fear is a fact to be reckoned with. It would be wrong to impute motives to any community or leaders. To distrust Malaviyaji or Mian Fazl-i-Hussain is to postpone a proper solution. Both honestly state what they feel. Wisdom lies therefore in brushing aside all side issues and facing the situation as it is, not as we would like it to be.

In my opinion therefore the writer has tried, be it ever so unconsciously, to overprove his case. He is right in saying that Hindus are divided into many antagonistic sects or parties each

setting up a claim for separate treatment. He is right also in stating that the untouchables have even stronger case than the Mussalmans for separate representation. The writer has made out a case not against the fact of Mussalman minority but against communal representation and separate electorates. He has shown that any extension of the doctrine of the Lucknow Pact must inevitably lead to communal representation for innumerable sub-castes and other denominations, thus indefinitely postponing the early advent of swaraj.

To extend the Lucknow Pact doctrine or even to retain it is fraught with danger. To ignore the Mussalman grievance as if it was not felt is also to postpone swaraj. Lovers of swaraj cannot therefore rest till a solution is found which would allay Mussalman apprehensions and yet not endanger swaraj. Such a solution is not impossible.

Here is one.

In my opinion the Mussalman claim for majority in Bengal and the Punjab in accordance with their numbers is irresistible. That claim cannot be resisted for the fear from the north or the North West. Hindus, if they want swaraj, must take the chance. So long as we fear the outside world, we must cease to think of swaraj. But swaraj we must have. I would therefore rule out the Hindu fear in considering the just claim of the Mussalmans. We must dare to do justice even at the cost of future safety.

What the Mussalmans want is not separate electorate for its own sake but they want their own real representatives to be sent to the legislatures and other elective bodies. This can be done by private arrangement rather than legal imposition. There is flexibility about private arrangement. A legal imposition tends to become more and more rigid. Private arrangement will continually test the honour and good faith of each party. Legal imposition avoids the necessity of honour or good faith. Private arrangement means a domestic settlement of domestic quarrels and a solid wall of united opposition against a common enemy—the foreign rule. I am told that the law prevents the working of the private arrangement I have in view. If it is so, we must seek to remove the legal obstacle and not create and add a new one. My plan therefore is to do away with separate electorates but secure the election of the desired and agreed number of Mussalman and other candidates in a given constituency under a joint ticket, Mussalman candidates to be nominated by previously known Mussalman associations. I need not enter into the question of representation in excess of numbers at the present stage. It can be considered and all difficulties in that

direction can be met when the principle of private arrangement is accepted by all.

No doubt my proposal presupposes a sincere desire on the part of all concerned to reach a solution in terms of swaraj. If communalism is the goal, then any private arrangement must break down. If, however, swaraj is the goal and the parties approach the question purely from a national standpoint, there need be no fear of a breakdown. On the contrary every party will be interested in its faithful working.

What the law should, however, provide is a just franchise whereby every community can have, if it wished, voters on the roll in proportion to its numbers. Our voters' rolls should answer the number of representatives in proportion to its population. But that question requires a critical examination of the working of the existing franchise. For me the existing franchise is wholly untenable for any swaraj scheme.

Young India, 19-2-1925

76. *TO S.D.N.*

I have dealt with one part of your letter in the leading article.[1] I must, for want of time, postpone the consideration of the other part to another occasion, probably next week.

Young India, 19-2-1925

77. *NOTES*

Remember 1st March

It will be remembered that many workers made promises at Belgaum just after the close of the session as to the number of self-spinning members they would register before the 1st March next. That day is soon coming upon us. I have before me the list of promised members. I hope the makers of these promises will prove as good as their word. Let me say for general information that the number promised for the whole of India was 6,803. All the workers were not present at the time. Bihar and Gujarat have, for instance, resolved upon securing far more than the figures promised at Belgaum. I would like the Provincial Secre-

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

taries, if they kindly will, to telegraph to *Young India* the numbers of self-spinning and other members registered at the end of the month. Workers everywhere are finding the task of securing voluntary spinners far more difficult than getting four-anna members. To me the value of the spinning franchise consists in its difficulty due not to want of ability but want of application. For let it be noted that the difficulty is confined not merely to unbelievers, it is applicable also to believers. They readily make promises but equally if not more readily break them. Witness the falling off in spinning during the month of December. I hope therefore that there will be ceaseless effort on the part of those who made promises.

RE: PRIZE ESSAY

Some friends have suggested that the time for sending in the prize eassay on hand-spinning and khaddar should be extended. One friend suggests the extension to as late as November. If I did so, it would defeat the purpose for which the essay is required. Mr. Revashanker has issued the prize with a view to stimulate thought and activity on the message of the spinning-wheel during this year of grace which is fast running out. The idea moreover of allowing a brief period is to concentrate the energy of the few searchers we have on the subject and to make it worthwhile even from a pecuniary standpoint for those khaddar students who may be in need, to devote their whole attention during the period to the essay. I do not expect an exhaustive treatise, but I do expect a classical introductory essay on the subject so as to serve as an infallible guide for more elaborate work. It should give an exhaustive bibliography on the subject and a scientific, brief, relevant, connected, summary of them.

There are many who question the facts often set forth in these columns and elsewhere to prove the economic value of the wheel. Many doubt the ability of the wheel to compete with the mills. Others regard it as a mere toy incapable even of producing an effect on the foreign cloth imports. The essay should contain incontestable statistics and argument in support of the value of the wheel unless the researches of impartial and truthful students make such presentation impossible. Such an effort is required during this year whilst the spinning franchise[1] is being tested.

[1] The Congress constitution was altered at Belgaum Congress, December 1924, making spinning a qualification instead of four annas per year.

I am happy to be able to inform the reader that some brilliant young men are regularly at the work already and that too not for its monetary value but for the love of it. I have consulted two of them on the suggestion of extension and they would be glad if the time can be extended. I am therefore extending the period to 30th April next. That means six more weeks. I trust that the extension will be considered sufficient by all who are making the attempt to bring out an essay worthy of the occasion.

Another suggestion comes from another friend. He thinks that the examiners should include one or more mill-owners, such as Messrs Ambalal Sarabhai and Matubhai Kantawala. The names of examiners were selected by me and I must confess that the omission of a mill-owner's name was deliberate. I felt that the examiners to be just to the subject should be believers in khaddar but open to reason and able to judge. My correspondent, however, suggests that even experts like Mr. Maganlal Gandhi are likely to make mistakes for their want of an intimate knowledge of the mill industry. I recognize the force of the objection and will therefore gladly put myself in correspondence with the gentlemen concerned and seek their co-operation in the examination.

Bengal Untouchables

A Bengali correspondent asks:

1. In Bengal the untouchables are not allowed to draw water from the wells, nor are they allowed to enter the room where drinking water is kept. What should be done to remove this evil? If we dig separate wells for them or establish separate schools, that will be making allowance for this vice.
2. The mentality of the untouchables in Bengal is that the upper classes should take water from their hands, but they themselves refuse to take water from the hands of those who are below them. What should be done to wean them from the error?
3. The Hindu Mahasabha in Bengal and the Hindus in general tell the people that you do not like the idea of taking water from the hands of untouchables—?

My answers are:

1. One way of removing the evil is for us to take water from the hands of the untouchables. I do not think that digging of separate wells for them will perpetuate the evil. It will take a long time to root out the effects of untouchability. It would be wrong to withhold help from the untouchables in the shape of providing them with separate wells for fear of others never letting them use

public wells. My belief is that if we build good wells for the untouchables many people will use them. Reform among the untouchables must proceed side by side with breaking down of the prejudice against them by caste Hindus realizing their duty towards them.

2. When the so-called "superior" Hindus begin to "touch" the untouchables, the untouchability among the untouchables themselves is bound to die a natural death. Our work must commence with the lowest among the untouchables.

3. I do not know what the Hindu Mahasabha of Bengal has been ascribing to me. My position is clear. Untouchables should be treated as and classed among Sudras. And since we do take water from the hands of Sudras, we should not hesitate to accept it from untouchables.

How Imprisonment Benefits

I quote interesting extracts from Acharya Gidwani's letter to his wife which I have been privileged to share with her:

> How are the children? Do cure them and yourself of the tea habit and give them all the milk that they can get. How is your study progressing? You will not make further improvement soon unless you attend to your composition. I trust that you are not neglecting Hindi and spinning. Spend all the hours of daylight in sunshine and fresh air. Although the gain seems small, I feel distinctly better. By the time you come again, I hope to be quite presentable; thanks to Muller's system to which Jawaharlal[1] had introduced me when he shared a cell with me here, the injury to my health is not irreparable. Throughout those nine months of confinement I kept up my breathing and muscular exercises. I have almost mastered the system. I wish I could persuade you also to start on it and bring up the children on it also. In any case tell Parvati that I want her to introduce it at once for young and old at home. The book is available at booksellers.
>
> I have not read much since I wrote to you last. My Sanskrit study is interrupted for want of the books I asked you to send me.
>
> I am taking lessons in carpentry now. I hope to start on weaving after some time.

As an ex-prisoner it is pleasant to compare notes with fellow prisoners. Acharya Gidwani is not alone in developing dislike of tea in his prison. I was myself a regular drinker of tea and coffee.

[1] Jawaharlal Nehru; (1889-1964); statesman and writer, India's first Prime Minister, 1947-64; "Bharat Ratna"; author of *Glimpses of World History* and *Autobiography*

But my first experience cured me of the habit. There was no tea allowed, and I began to like the idea of being free from the slavery of tea. For us in India it is a luxury we can ill-afford. But the worst of tea is that it replaces milk. Tea has only as much nutritive value as there are milk and sugar in it. The way we prepare tea in India counteracts the effect of milk and sugar because of the boiling of the leaves which sets free the injurious tanin contained in the leaf. If tea is to be drunk at all the leaves should never be boiled but they should be put in a strainer and boiling water poured gently over them. The water that thus trickles down into the kettle should be straw colour. But the safest thing to do is to follow Acharya Gidwani's prescription and to give up tea altogether. Those who want simply to drink, but not eat, may take boiling water with sugar and milk and add a little cinnamon powder to give the water a colouring. Acharya Gidwani's remarks on Muller's system will be read with interest. In my opinion the Acharya shares the weakness of new converts. All these systems promise much more than they can perform. There is nothing new in Muller's system. It is an indifferent and incomplete reproduction of some of the *Hatha Yoga*[1] practices. Considered purely from a health point of view *Hatha Yoga* practices are almost perfect. Only they share with everything Indian the disabilities of their origin. The secret consists in deep and well-regulated breathing and gently stretching the muscles. Muller attracts us because he has given physical reasons for the exercises he prescribes. His system has its use, no doubt, in that those who will not take the trouble to understand the intricacies of *Hatha Yoga* exercises can certainly profit by following the easy instructions prepared by Muller. What is more, we have not many accessible representatives of *Hatha Yoga* and the few there are naturally and rightly do not trouble about its physical consequences and therefore teach them only to those who are spiritually minded.

Lovers of spinning cannot but appreciate the Acharya's devotion to the wheel and to Hindi and Sanskrit. It is a pleasure to me to be able to give after a long time a cheery letter from Acharya Gidwani who is now keeping much better health than he did some time ago.

The Latest Discovery

Since my return from Pindi I have visited nearly ten villages of Borsad taluk. It is a taluk of the successful and glorious

[1] A system of yoga based upon physical exercises and complicated postures

satyagraha of 1923 under Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel's leadership. It contains an intelligent, able and comparatively hard population. But even in this taluk I was pained to find in some villages squalor and degradation that were due purely to poverty. The crops were damaged by a severe frost. In certain villages the people were in constant danger of having their fields raided by cattle let loose upon them at the instance practically of the principal landowner. It was not possible for them to feel settled in life or feel that they had a home of their own which they could take pride in. The result was despair and consequent indifference to effort. There was nothing but the charkha for such people. But even the charkha makes slow headway. They do not want to do anything. They want merely to eke out a living somehow. "We have gone on like this for years, let us close our lives like this", is the reply written in their blank and incredulous looks. It is the same thing to them even if one presented them with some other industry. They do not want to *work* because they have hitherto *slaved*. And having only done that, they believe in *slaving* but not in *working*. This is a sad discovery not made by me for the first time. It was the same thing in Champaran, worse in Orissa. But it came upon me in Borsad taluk with a strange and overwhelming force. I was ill-prepared for the discovery in this taluk. On the contrary I had expected to find well-ordered villages where I would see enthusiasm and brightness and hope. Not that all the villages were alike. Although they are so near one another, each has problems of its own and each has a distinct individuality. For the villages I have described, the spinning-wheel is the only hope, if there is any. Cattle cannot raid it. Frost cannot bite it. It is man's protection against cruel nature's ravages and some protection against man's depradations.

Ample work awaits those patriotic young men who do not mind the village life and who can derive pleasure from silent and sustained labour, not too taxing and yet taxing enough for its monotony. It requires sufficient application to be able to appreciate the monotony of life-giving industry. A beginner of music knows the dullness of the initial effort but the very monotony becomes a pleasure as soon as he has mastered the art. So it is with the village workers. As soon as they have lived down the excitement of the intoxicating town life and settled down to work, the monotony of labour will give strength and hope because it is productive. Who is ever jaded by the monotonous and unfailing regularity with which the solar system works. Though as ancient as time, it has never ceased to excite wonder and

praise. We know, too, that a disturbance in the even tenor of its working means destruction of our race. So it is with the village solar system whose centre is the wheel.

Young India, 19-2-1925

78. LETTER TO SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

Magh Vad 11 [February 19, 1925][1]

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I write this letter on the train to Porbunder and hence I am using a pencil.

I shall be at the Ashram from 22nd to 26th and shall leave for Delhi on the 27th. I shall be staying there till at least the 3rd March. The English gentleman can see me during that period. The programme after the 3rd will be decided at Delhi.

At the last minute, when I was about to leave Rajkot, Jayshanker Vaghji saw me on behalf of the Jam Saheb and said that he, the Jam Saheb, was eager to meet me. He wishes to meet me in Bombay after the 7th March. It has been decided that I should send a wire to Jayshanker when I go to Bombay.

I have received an unsatisfactory reply from the Dewan of Gondal in which he says that it is improper for me to interfere in the affairs of the Gondal State. Please let me know the result of your effort.

In Rajkot the Thakore Saheb showed many courtesies. I have told him my ideas.

Hope your spinning-wheel is working well.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3198. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

[1] On February 19 and 20, 1925, Gandhiji was at Porbunder.

79. TELEGRAM TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO VICEROY

PORBUNDER,
February 19, 1925

P.S.V.
DELHI

THANKS TELEGRAM.[1] IN "YOUNG INDIA" MENTIONED YOUR TELEGRAM I HAVE STATED IDEAL BUT HAVE NO DESIRE DISTURB WITHDRAWAL PROSECUTION. MY PURPOSE IS ESTABLISH REAL PEACE WHICH I HOLD IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE WITH GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION, OR BETTER STILL WITHOUT PRIVATE AND SPONTANEOUS EFFORT [OR] INTERVENTION MY FRIENDS AND SELF CAN ONLY ASSIST GOVERNMENT EFFORT SO FAR AS IT PROMOTES SUBSTANTIAL PEACE. PLEASE REPLY SABARMATI.[2]

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456; also *Young India*, 26-2-1925

[1] *Vide* footnote 2 to "Telegram to Private Secretary to Viceroy," 9-2-1925.

[2] The Private Secretary to the Viceroy replied on February 22: "His Excellency desires me to thank you for your telegram. The agreement which has now been laboriously reached was only possible with the spontaneous help of private persons of both communities. It is of course of the nature of a compromise between the two communities and any alteration in its terms would upset the whole settlement. Moreover it is only on the basis of this settlement that His Excellency consented after much heart searching to a withdrawal of prosecutions. While, therefore, His Excellency appreciates that your own desire is also for peace, he feels that your proposed visit would lead to a reopening of the case and therefore however much he may regret it, he must abide by the previous decision."

80. *SPEECH IN REPLY TO WELCOME ADDRESS, PORBUNDER*

February 19, 1925

I am grateful to the citizens of Porbunder for arranging that this address should be presented to me by the Diwan Saheb, and compliment them on their good sense in giving me a cheque for Rs. 201 instead of presenting the address in a casket of silver or sandalwood. If the people of this place do not understand my wishes and fulfil them, where else in this wide world can I expect the people to do so? I have said at so many places that I have no provision for the safe custody of articles of silver and other valuables. To make such provision is to invite trouble. I have been able to preserve my freedom only because I have refused to possess such articles. I have been, therefore, telling the country that those who wish to follow the path of satyagraha should be ready to live in poverty and embrace death at any moment. How can I spare space for preserving a silver casket? I am, therefore, glad that you gave me a cheque instead.

But, while on the one hand I offer compliments to you, on the other I pity myself for my avarice. My appetite is more than can be satisfied by this piece of paper. A sum of two hundred and one rupees is not good enough for me. I say this because I can assure you that you will get from me twice as much as what I take from you or even more. I do not receive a single pice which does not grow into a veritable tree raining coins—not through interest but through the manner of its use. It would be much better to perish than to live on interest. I put every pice to the best possible use and profit. I will use every pice I receive to help the country to preserve its purity and to clothe its naked. Every pie, moreover, will be accounted for. I have not come into contact with any person whom I might have told that he had given me enough. This is why my Memon friends always keep away from me. Were it not so, persons like Omar Haji Amod Zaveri[1] would be present in this meeting. They tell me that wherever I meet them I try to rob them. It is, thus, very risky to be a friend of mine in these hard times. Only such persons who, being

[1] A merchant of Durban who liberally contributed money for the public activities of Indians in South Africa; a trustee of Phœnix; *vide* Vol. XI, p. 320.

Hindus, are ready to offer their money freely for the service of the *Bhangis*, or are ready to use all their strength and their money to win the country's freedom—only such persons can afford to be my friends in these hard times. The Thakore Saheb of Rajkot showered his love on me so much that I was almost drowned in the flood. But all the time I was trembling, wondering how long I would be able to retain his friendship. Why should I not feel happy at receiving an address from the hands of the Ruler of a State in which my father was a Diwan? My grandfather was the Diwan of the State during the rule of the present Maharana's grandfather, and my great grandfather was Diwan to the latter's father. The Rana Saheb's father was my friend and client. Having received material benefit from him, is it possible that I would also not be pleased by an invitation from the present Maharana Saheb? But it is difficult to retain all friendships, for instance, I have not been able to retain that of the British. The reason is that I think it necessary to preserve only one friendship in this life, namely, God's. God means the voice of conscience. If I hear it say that I must sacrifice the world's friendship; I would be ready to do so. I am eager for your friendship and would not feel satisfied even if I could take away all your money. I will always ask you for more and, should you send me away, I would seek a place in God's house. My field of work is India. So long as a fire is raging in the country, I cannot possibly think of leaving it to go anywhere else. South Africa would welcome me, but at present I would not like to go even there as the fire in South Africa can be put out only when the fire in India has been put out. I have been appealing to all Princes for help in extinguishing that fire. Is it unreasonable of me to expect most from Porbunder in this matter?

I expect similar help from the people too. I ask for co-operation from you all. If you give it, the result may be that all of us will resume co-operation with the British. I do not mean that we shall go running to them; rather, they will come running to us. They tell me that I am a good man, but that my co-workers are rogues, that incidents like the one at Chauri Chaura will betray me. But I believe in human nature. Everyone has a soul and can exercise soul-force as much as I. You can see the soul-force in me because I have ever kept my soul wide awake by humbly entreating it, or beating a drum or dancing before it. Yours may not be equally awake, but we are all equal in our innate capacities. The Rulers and their subjects, Hindus and Muslims, all are fighting one another but without God's

help they cannot move even a blade of grass. If the subjects think that they will cultivate strength and harass the Rulers and the latter think that they can be strong enough to crush the subjects, if Hindus believe that it is no difficult matter for them to crush seven crores of Muslims and the latter think that they can easily crush the twenty-two crores of Hindus nourished on no strength-giving food, then the Rulers and the subjects, Hindus and Muslims, all are thoughtless. It is *Khuda's*[1] injunction, it is said in the Vedas and in the Bible, that all men are brothers. All religions proclaim that the world is held together by the chain of love, and learned students of Shastras tell us that, without this chain, the atoms would fall apart, that water would lack the property of existing as liquid and each drop would exist by itself. If the same chain, likewise, did not bind human beings to one another, we would all be dead. We should, therefore, have such a chain to bind us if we want swaraj or *Ramarajya.* That chain of love is nothing but the thread of hand-spun yarn. If the yarn is foreign, it would only serve as iron shackles on your feet. Your links should be with your villages, with the *Rabaris* and with the *Mers* of Barda. If, instead, you have your links with Lancashire or Ahmedabad, of what profit will that be to Porbunder? What the people really want is that we should have some use for their labour, that we should not force them to remain idle and so starve them. Is it right that instead of getting stone from Ranavav, you should order your requirements from Italy? How can you afford to order your cloth or ghee from Calcutta in preference to the cloth woven in your own villages and the ghee made from the milk of your own cows and buffaloes? If you do not use your own products but order your needs from elsewhere, I would say that you were chained with fetters. I have been a free man ever since I discovered this sacred principle of complete swadeshi and understood that my life should have a link with the poorest among the poor. Neither the Rana Saheb nor Lord Reading nor even King George can deprive me of my happiness.

I should like to tell the women that I will regard myself sanctified by their sight only when I see them adorned with khadi and know that they spin. You go to the temple regularly to preserve your dharma, but only those among you who spin will have hearts as holy as temples. I want to know from you whether you will listen to me only if I tell you about some miracles in the Himalayas. Will you say that I have lost my head because I tell you that you

[1] God's

should have a spinning-wheel in each home as you have a stove? I am quite sane. I am wise, and have been proclaiming what I have known from experience.

Someone asked me what I hoped to gain by accepting an address in Porbunder, and advised me to ascertain first what class of persons here wear khadi. Instead of asking what class of persons wear khadi, I may ask whether anyone at all does so. You like to wear fine cloth. Some rich millionaires told me that even they could not afford to wear such cloth always. You will, however, get fine cloth to wear if you spin fine yarn with the same care with which you prepare thin *shev*[1] in your homes.

So long as this problem of yarn is not solved, you will not be able to forge the chain of love with which to bind people together. If you wish to bind the whole world with such a chain, there is, assuredly, no way but this; nor is there any other way of bringing about Hindu-Muslim unity. When I went to Rajkot, I was accompanied by Shri Shuaib Qureshi[2]. The local Muslims told him that I was deceiving him, that in asking the people to propagate khadi my motive was to ruin Muslim merchants. But Shuaib is not a man who can be misled in this manner. He knows that I would never concern myself about the handful of merchants engaged in the foreign cloth trade. He himself is a lover of khadi, and he knows that I have not been able to serve the cause of khadi or the country as well as I have served Islam. Our Muslim brethren should know that India is the land of their birth, and that they cannot hope to free the Islamic countries without first securing India's freedom.

This may turn out to be my last tour of Kathiawar. Perhaps I have only a few years to live. It was with the utmost reluctance that I accepted the Presidentship of the Congress, and also of the Kathiawar Political Conference. Only ten months remain now. I have, therefore, come here to tell you that if you look upon me more especially as your brother—though I regard myself as a brother of all living creatures—listen to my appeal and spin for half an hour daily. You will lose nothing thereby, and the country will have her problem of poverty solved. On how many things shall I pour out my heart to you? If you do not get rid of the evil of untouchability, our dharma will perish. True *Vaishnava dharma*[3] is the most life-giving. At present, on the

[1] A thread-like preparation of wheat or other flour

[2] Editor of *New Era*

[3] Religion of the worshippers of Vishnu, the preserver in the Hindu Trinity

contrary, *Antyajas* are being destroyed in the name of that dharma. The essence of Hinduism does not lie in the practice of untouchability. Eradication of untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity and khadi—these are the three sacred articles of my faith, and I appeal to both men and women, to the prince and the pauper, to work for them.

The evil of drink must go, and that through the people's own efforts. I have no doubt that people can end this evil by their own efforts. If some unthinking persons had not adopted methods of coercion, this evil would have disappeared from the country long ago. I have heard that many sea-men in Porbunder have given up drinking, and also that the Rana Saheb approves of this movement and is ready to help. We cannot hope to be free till we are free from the evil of drink. The methods adopted in Europe for winning freedom will not help us. There is a world of difference between the temper of the people in Europe and the climate there, on the one hand, and on the other, the temper of our people and our climate. The people of Europe can harden their hearts against pity, our people cannot. Muslims of other countries tell me that Muslims of India are comparatively of a mild temper. Whether this is a good thing or not, only the Hindus and the Muslims, or the world, can say. Personally, I feel that we stand to lose nothing by their being mild. Being compassionate does not mean being timid or forsaking the use of arms; the really strong man is he who, though armed, does not strike the enemy but stands before him boldly, ready to be killed. It is the ruling principle of a brave man's life, and the essence of the Kshatriya spirit, that he never abandons his post of duty, never turns back. It is necessary for anyone who wants to cultivate these qualities to give up the use of intoxicants. I, therefore, would be happy to hear that the people of Porbunder had totally given up drinking. In Rajkot, the evil is spreading wide. The shopkeepers are competing with those in the civil station, with the result that liquor is sold at the same price as soda. But those who get liquor thus cheap shed tears of blood afterwards. Workers' wives come and ask me if I cannot persuade the Thakore Saheb [to close the liquor-booths]. The evil of drinking, they tell me, has ruined their homes and introduced discord in their families; their husbands have taken to immoral ways and their homes are sinking into poverty. If we want to earn the blessings of these poor women, we shall have to take courage in our hands in asking the Rulers to save the people from this terror. That the drink-trade is a source of income to the State or that drinking makes people happy for a while should

be no consideration with them. If the evil spreads, the condition of the country will become so frightful that it will automatically perish; no one will have to try to destroy it. May God bless you and give you the good sense to listen to my words and understand what I say, so that the entire world may benefit through you.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 1-3-1925

81. SPEECH AT "ANTYAJA" MEETING, PORBUNDER

February 19, 1925

DIWAN SAHIB, "ANTYAJA" BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I am very happy to see you all. I feel great happiness in meeting the *Antyajas* who have come here—the term denoting *Dheds*, *Bhangis* and *Chamars*[1] who are mistakenly treated as outcastes. You know that caste Hindus do not come into contact with *Antyajas*. They believe that they can offer to *Antyajas* the food left over by others. Thus all manner of injustice is done to them. Many amongst the Hindus are trying hard to set this right. In the Congress important discussions are going on and great efforts made [to end this].

But they cannot do much by themselves. Your help too is needed. Many Hindus tell me: "You take their side; but you should see for yourself how these people live. They eat carrion and they do not bathe or wash. One feels nausea at the sight. They have dirty habits. How then can we touch them?"

There is some truth in this. The truth is worth listening to. You should give up whatever is bad in you and should help in reforming yourselves. Even God does not help those who do not help themselves. So it is I tell you to help yourselves. Wash your face at dawn at four o'clock, clean your eyes of mucus, and pray to God. If you ask me how to do this, I would beg you to take the name of Rama. Krishna or Karsan, or whatever name we call Him by, signifies the same Being. But the name Rama is easiest of all. We must beg of Him, "Oh God, make us good"! Bathing once in several days is not good. You should bathe daily. Labourers should bathe at night after their work. You should not steal. You should keep your children clean. It is your fault if they are not clean. What can the poor school teacher do? The third thing is not to drink liquor. The man who drinks becomes

[1] A community engaged in skinning dead cattle

Satan. You should not eat carrion,—in fact you should avoid meat. Won't it do if you get only *roti* and milk? Those who know how to weave should keep up weaving. I can put up with it if you do not spin, but not with bad habits.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 183-4

82. TELEGRAM TO MOTILAL NEHRU

PORBUNDER,
February 20, 1925

PANDIT NEHRU
WESTERN HOSTEL
DELHI

THINK DR. BESANT MAY PUBLISH HER REPORT[1].

GANDHI

From a draft: S.N. 2456

83. LETTER TO REVASHANKER ZAVERI

[February 20, 1925]

RESPECTED REVASHANKERBHAI,

I return herewith the correspondence with Patwari. I have gone through it. I have seen the reply sent to him. I feel distressed at his behaviour. I had high hopes of him, but for the present at any rate they are vain.

Yesterday I had an interview with the Rana Saheb of Porbunder. He too has promised to give help for khadi work. We talked to our heart's content.

I reach Wankaner today.[2]

Respects from
MOHANDAS

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 1261

[1] *Vide* "Notes", 26-2-1925, sub-title, "28th February".
[2] Gandhiji reached Wankaner on February 20, 1925.

84. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

WANKANER,
Magh Krishna 13 [*February 21, 1925*][1]

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I had spoken to you about the Muslims; the National Muslim University of Aligarh is at present in straitened circumstances. I have told the workers there that I would try to get financial assistance for them. They are trying to collect a certain amount. I told them that I would try to get about Rs. 50,000 for them. Please give this matter your consideration and, if you feel inclined to give the entire amount, or even a part of it, please let me know. I am making a deep study of the Hindu-Muslim question. I am being more and more convinced of my own remedy, even though I see great difficulties in the way.

I am touring Kathiawar at present. My present journey will be over today.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

[PS.]

I shall be in the Ashram from the 12th to the 26th and reach Delhi on the 28th.

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6105. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

85. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, WADHWAN CAMP

February 21, 1925

Today we feel keenly the absence of Shivlalbhai[2]. You have heard about the services he rendered to Kathiawar and to the country. It is India's misfortune that those worthy men who pass away are not replaced. Everyone is destined to pass away. Life and death form a pair and there should neither be happiness nor sorrow concerning them. Nevertheless we grieve when someone dies. But I feel that such grief springs from one's self-interest. The

[1] Gandhiji was at Wankaner on this date during his tour of Kathiawar.

[2] Founder of a technical school in Wadhwan; *vide* "Reminiscences of Kathiawar-II", 8-3-1925.

revered memory of Shivlalbhai reminds me of the extent of our own loss. If we want his memory to live for ever, we should take his place. We should feel no shame in surpassing him in work. One should be ashamed only if one does not add to one's inheritance. One is considered a true descendant only if one adds to one's inheritance. Our duty is to add to Shivlalbhai's legacy. I am sorry that this has not been done.

It is my ambition that khadi work should become every man's job and it should enter every village. As long as the wheel does not find a place in every single village and everyone does not wear khadi, we are not likely to attain pure swaraj. Hindus and Muslims have not united. If they want to do so they should begin spinning. Khadi also covers the problems of *Antyajas*. This problem has created commotion in Wadhwan. I do not understand why. We will have to embrace the *Antyajas* if we want to make khadi every man's work. The good name of India depends on Muslim and *Antyaja* weavers. One cannot get khadi of one's liking without an organization among weavers. I have just come from Wankaner; there are three hundred Muslim weavers there whose work is beautiful. But there are only two or three who weave hand-spun yarn, If we want others to weave khadi, we must begin spinning. We do not want those women who spin for money to give up their other occupations and spin for us. We want to make those spin who do not get even two pice. In our country where one gets only *roti* and salt, the wheel is a *Kamadhenu*[1]. This much of *yajna* is essential. It is good if it is performed systematically.

While doing the work of spinning do not go over to weaving. If we want fine yarn we have to spin with our own hands, and without fine cloth what will our delicate brothers do? You will pay six annas or eight annas for weaving one seer of yarn. But no one will spin for you forty-count yarn for six annas.

If you want to preserve the memory of Shivlalbhai, then keep his work alive. Khadi work was Shivlal's first and last love. He has given so much money for khadi work that we should be ashamed of ourselves if we failed to keep it up.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 188-90

[1] The mythical cow yielding all one wishes

86. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, WADHWAN

February 21, 1925

I am just returning from a visit to the *Antyaja* quarters. I felt happy as I sat among them, for I was doing my duty. For being with you here, God will certainly ask me whether I had come here to give you, the citizens of Wadhwan, any new thoughts. You have confined them to their locality and, therefore, I had much to tell them which they had never been told. I have no miracle to perform before you and dazzle you. I only beg you to understand your dharma and follow it. I will tell you nothing more than that what you take to be dharma is, in fact, sin. Ponder over this carefully, accept it only if it appeals both to your heart and to your head and cease treating the *Antyajas* as untouchables.

On my returning to India [from Africa], I [first] went to Ahmedabad, consulted the citizens there, placed my views before them and established my Ashram[1] there only after they had agreed to support and help me for one year. In my consultations with them I had also spoken of my views on the issue of *Antyajas*. I said that I did not discriminate even against those belonging to other faiths and would most certainly admit *Antyajas*. They told me that I would never get *Antyajas* of the type I had mentioned. Well, I decided to stay there, got utensils and other articles of household use. But there was no money. But I had faith [in God]. A few months passed and Dudabhai[2] arrived with a note from Thakkar[3]. As soon as I took him in, the people of Ahmedabad decided to boycott me. The people who drew water from the same well as we also boycotted us. But I told them that I would bear everything they might do, but would not leave Ahmedabad. If it is God's will that I should live here, I told them, He will enable me to do so, otherwise I would go and live among *Antyajas*. I knew, I said, what my self-respect required, and would not feel insulted by their talking angrily with me. After five days, the

[1] *Vide* Vol. XIII.

[2] An untouchable teacher whose joining the Ashram caused a furore; *vide An Autobiography*, Part V, Ch. X.

[3] A. V. Thakkar (1869-1950); Gandhiji's associate and a life-member of the Servants of India Society; devoted himself to the cause of tribals and untouchables

people using the well melted and Dudabhai was permitted to draw water from it. But the problem of money remained. But on the day I had no money left, God came in person and gave me the money I needed. One fine day, a car drove up to the Ashram gate. A gentleman whom I had never met previously alighted from it, came up to me and told me that he wanted to donate Rs. 13,000, and asked me if I would accept the money. Next day he came with Rs. 13,000 in bank-notes, gave the money to me and left. That Satyagraha Ashram still exists. I wanted to be loyal to my principles of satyagraha and stand my ground in Ahmedabad. The Ahmedabad people have not deserted me, they come to see me and I enjoy their goodwill. This is so simply because I had bound them with the chain of love and I was confident that I would get the reward of my love from Ahmedabad itself. Shri Fulchand is a man who will stick to his post as I did. Why should he run away from Wadhwan? He should not desert his post even if he has to starve. If he does anything in anger or out of obstinacy, or says anything to hurt you, that would be sin. If, however, his words spring from love, they will touch your heart. God alone knows with what feelings he acts; the result will depend on what they are.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 8-3-1925

87. SPEECH AT OPENING OF NURSERY SCHOOL, WADHWAN

February 21, 1925

I am supposed to take away with me this lock and key, as also this trowel which has not been soiled with earth at all. The gold coins which Shri Dhorajiwala has given to me, I will hand over to Fulchandbhai. Both these things have a meaning. A good many activities are going on in the country at present; who can say how many of them are genuine, or what self-sacrifice and sincerity of effort lie behind them? I, for one, do not know. All that I know is that of the innumerable institutions which are being run in the country at present, a few, we can say, have life in them. An English poet has said, describing Heaven, that St. Peter stands guard at its gate, and the key with which he opens the gate is

of iron and not of gold.[1] Explaining this, another poet has said that it is not easy to open the gate of Heaven, that it cannot be opened with a key made of gold since gold is a rather soft metal, whereas iron is supposed to be one of the strongest metals. The gate, therefore, can be opened only with a key made of iron. Here in Kathiawar we say of a very difficult task that it is as difficult as chewing iron pellets. Running an institution like this is a task of that kind. For building the walls of a library, a trowel made of silver can be of no use. We need one made of iron. Likewise, we cannot use a silver padlock for locking its doors. We must have an iron one. There is, thus, an artificiality about the first steps we have taken in doing both these things. I laid the foundation by merely spreading some earth; the work of building will be done by the masons and the doors of the temple [of knowledge] will be opened by the teachers. A library does not mean a building containing books, or the books in it, or idle visitors who do not read the books. Were it otherwise, we would find many booksellers to be men of character. Because the building of the nursery school is a fine one, and much money has been spent on it, can we say that the school will flourish? It will do so only if it gets the services of men who can run it on sound lines, only if it has a soul in it. Ordinarily I do not like to perform the opening ceremony of such institutions, for how does it help me to do so? But I agreed to perform the opening ceremony of this because I have faith in the workers who are behind it. That is all. You should not suppose that any particular good will follow because I have performed the opening ceremony. I am a bird ever on the wing. Today I am here, tomorrow I may be in Ahmedabad and the day after in Delhi. However, I welcome your exploiting my name to do what good you can. The survival of this library will not depend on the support of the rich, or on the children using it or on anyone donating a hundred thousand gold coins. On the contrary, all that money may prove to be an obstacle. It has been my experience that whenever I received much help in money the cause suffered. At the time of the struggle in South Africa, as soon as money poured in from this country the movement lost its vigour, in the same way that Yudhishthira's chariot came down a little nearer the earth when he said: "Whether man

[1] The lines from Lord Byron's *Vision of Judgment* are:
"Saint Peter sat by the celestial gate:
His keys were rusty, and the lock was dull."

or elephant I do not know."[1] God has given only 24 hours to all of us, and all that we require for that length of time can be obtained by eight hours' work. Everyone should be satisfied with that. This is my reason for not wishing that this institution should prosper financially. It should have only enough to enable the workers to keep body and soul together while they serve it; they will lay down their lives for it if they find it necessary to do so.

I would describe an institution which had plenty of money but no more than five workers as one which had come up like a mushroom. It will survive for five days and then perish as the mushrooms do. The point of what I have been saying is that the workers who are attending this meeting and have pledged themselves to lay down their lives for it, should put their faith in God and, even when they feel that they are drowning, they should cling to their faith and keep swimming. If they do not act thus, you may be certain that they will invite upon themselves the curses of the country, for they will not have justified this imposing building. Such palatial buildings may be all right for Princes and Rulers, but this building will ill become the poverty of the country, if we do not justify it by an appropriate return to the country by way of service and if the workers do not feel haunted by it as by a ghost so long as they have not been able to render such return. The establishment of this institution and my performing its opening ceremony will have been justified if Shri Fulchand and his co-workers live in it as men who had given up all attachment, even as king Janaka was known to have done though he lived in a palace. If, however, the spirit of renunciation vanishes and love of comfort comes to prevail in its place, the institution is bound to perish. That school alone is a national school which helps us to win swaraj and all whose teachers abide by the rules, are inspired by a spirit of self-sacrifice and lead an austere life.

I was pained to hear that the citizens of Wadhwan have boycotted this institution. Money should be available locally for an institution for as long as it is in need, and the workers who run it should also be able to win the goodwill of the local population. The position of public workers like us who are fighting for swaraj is difficult, for they are also reformers. A reformer finds himself in

[1] The story is told in the *Mahabharata* that when they found Dronacharya, leader of the Kaurava army, irresistible, Yudhishthira, who was reputed for his absolute truthfulness, was prevailed upon to say, in Drona's hearing, that Ashvatthama was killed, but he added in a whisper the words translated above. Ashvatthama was the name of Drona's son and, believing that he was killed, Drona laid down arms and was killed by Arjuna.

an anomalous position, for he is not able to enter the atmosphere of the locality and is content to receive what help he can get from outside. Otherwise, what connection can Dr. Mehta of Rangoon have with this school? Wadhwan contributed to the fund even though they knew Shri Fulchand's views about serving *Antyajas*; I do not understand, then, why the people have boycotted him now. I should like them to come and put their point of view to me, tell me what they feel.

A national institution means one which strengthens the nation's soul, and not merely one which is not connected with the Government in any way. A national institution flourishes on the foundation of character, it does not become national by having a large number of pupils and enabling them to make a living. They are indeed welcome to work for their livelihood; but it is not the aim of education to equip them for that purpose. Its aim is to awaken the pupil's soul, to bring out his spiritual powers, to train his body, intellect and soul. I am told that such a large number of pupils are enrolled in the school at Wankaner because its results at examinations are one hundred per cent. This is a narrow way of measuring its worth.

Probably it is true that the teachers there are good; however, the children are enrolled there not in the hope that they will learn from the teachers to live virtuous lives, but in the expectation that because of the teachers' efficiency they will pass the examinations. We must abandon this narrow criterion. The Vidyapith and the national schools exist in order that we may learn to do so. I urge the parents, therefore, to support such institutions, and urge the teachers to remain loyal to their ideals, to welcome suffering and to draw the pupils to them by the strength of their character. If they succeed in this, my coming here and performing the opening ceremony will have been fully rewarded.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 8-3-1925

88. MY NOTES

Khadi in Utkal

From Calcutta Shri Shankerlal Banker writes about Utkal, i.e., Orissa:[1]

There is no other province as poor as Utkal. Khadi work, therefore, could progress better there than anywhere else. But the above letter tells us that the work done there is the poorest. The reason is well known. Where food is scarce, energy and enthusiasm for work disappear. If good workers are steadily forthcoming, Utkal can be trusted to overtake all other provinces.

Yarn in Addition to Khadi

A gentleman writes: "Will it not be much better if, instead of purchasing hand-spun yarn and sending it to you, we send you the requisite amount for khadi and wear it?" There is a misunderstanding behind this question. The Congress has demanded not one of the two things, but both of them. First, everyone should send 2,000 yards of hand-spun yarn every month whether spun by oneself or someone else. Secondly, everyone should wear khadi. And so there is no alternative, but the two together are obligatory. A mere spinner cannot become a Congress member nor can a mere khadi-wearer. And this is quite right. By making spinning universal we shall increase the production of khadi and by making the use of khadi universal we shall increase the consumption of khadi. That alone will remove starvation from India.

A Woman's Objection

This gentleman further writes: "When I went to persuade a woman to wear khadi, she objected: 'If I wear khadi, my husband may be attracted by a woman using foreign or mill-cloth and thus lose his character.'" I cannot expect such a reply from any virtuous woman. But since the issue has been raised it should be considered. If any husband deviates from his moral course simply because his wife observes simplicity or performs her duty, then the virtuous wife should scarcely care for him. A man's character is not worth anything if he could be tempted merely by another woman's clothes. A husband who is seduced by a change in dress can also be seduced by a more beautiful woman.

[1] The letter is not translated here. It gave details of khadi work in Orissa.

My experience, however, is contrary to the statement of this woman. I know hundreds of husbands who have been delighted to find their wives in khadi clothes. Their household expenditure has been reduced and their love for their khadi-clad wives has grown. But it is also possible that this sister had no mind to use khadi and so unawares she might have raised this unworthy objection. I appeal to the sisters who think like her to take boldly to khadi and realize that beauty does not consist in dress but in purity of character, and clothes are not meant for adornment but for protecting the body from heat and cold.

WHAT SHALL WE DO?

Two residents of Jetpur had sent me the following letter[1] to my Jetpur address:

The description is correct. We can hardly emerge out of the enervating atmosphere without the strength of will. The class to which the above correspondents belong suffers from the ailment of idleness. Being accustomed to earn their wealth by means of cunning, they do not like to earn it by physical labour. Wants have multiplied and so the meagre earnings from physical labour cannot satisfy them. Unwarranted expenses on such heads as marriages and deaths have all soared so high that they cannot be met without incurring debts or earning by unfair means. The body cannot undertake the tiller's toil; nor is there the requisite capital or skill. All that is left is the spinning-wheel. Here the wheel symbolizes not only spinning but all the processes of cloth production. This is an occupation that requires very little capital and also very little physical strength. This can offer a good livelihood if one gives up the prevalent pomp, simplifies living and sheds lethargy. If the correspondents cultivate a little more will-power, they can with moderate efforts learn spinning and weaving and thus earn their living.

The earnings from weaving are not enough yet, because khadi has not caught the fancy of the people. But with the spread of khadi many of us will take to weaving as a profession or earn our bread by honest trade in khadi. In short, if these gentlemen can promise some little effort they should seek admission to any khadi training centre. In Kathiawar, there is one such institution at Madhada. And the Political Conference has made spread of khadi its main activity in Kathiawar these days. The correspondents can consult

[1] Not translated here. It described practical difficulties of the semi-literate business classes in adopting spinning for their livelihood.

its secretary and find a solution to their problem. They should remember that in this occupation there is no room for parasites.

KHADI EXHIBITION

In describing the Khadi Exhibition organized during the anniversary celebrations of the Supa Gurukul, the manager of its khadi section writes:[1]

If such exhibitions are held occasionally, they will certainly result in the spread of khadi and the spinning-wheel.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 22-2-1925

89. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD,
February 22, 1925

Mr. Gandhi has arrived in his Satyagraha Ashram this morning after visiting Rajkot, Porbunder, Wankaner and Wadhwan in Kathiawar. He also visited on his way back Ganod Garashia centre. He met the Princes of all these States and was much struck by the solicitude they seemed to evince for the welfare of their subjects. People of all these States whom he met also spoke highly of their Princes. The experiment that His Highness the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot is making with a Representative Assembly he has founded, says Mr. Gandhi, is deeply interesting, though it is yet too early to give any definite opinion about it. From what he has come to know of it, however, makes him hopeful of success. Wankaner has made primary education compulsory in Wankaner itself and amongst the higher classes.

Mr. Gandhi remarked:

It is a sign of the times that in all these places I noticed among the people the keenest desire for total prohibition. In Rajkot it is most keenly felt, because there an unhealthy and ugly competition is going on between the State liquor shops and the Civil Station liquor shops. The result is that the prices have considerably gone down and the lower classes are taking to liquor more than ever before. Their womenfolk are bitterly complaining about the havoc that is being played in their families owing to men returning day after day in a drunken state. People are urging the Thakore Saheb to abolish liquor shops altogether. The latter is reluctant to do so on the ground of individual liberty. He is of opinion that temperance should be brought about by preaching. The State Assembly

[1] The letter is not translated here.

has unanimously passed a resolution requesting the Darbar to close all licensed liquor shops, and prohibit distillation of liquor except for medicinal purposes, if necessary. It will be interesting to learn how the Thakore Saheb deals with this resolution.

The Hindu, 23-2-1925

90. TELEGRAM TO SECRETARY, CONGRESS COMMITTEE, CALCUTTA[1]

February 23, 1925

SECRETARY CONGRESS COMMITTEE
CALCUTTA

THINK GOING BENGAL MARCH ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE. CANNOT COME BEFORE APRIL.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

91. TELEGRAM TO GOVINDDAS

February 23, 1925

GOVINDDAS
TREASURER
SHERTALI

ARRANGING SEND FUNDS.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

[1] An identical telegram was sent by Gandhiji to the Chairman of the Reception Committee of the Bengal Provincial Conference, Faridpur.

92. TELEGRAM TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

February 23, 1925

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI[1]
EXTENSION
SALEM

PAY VYKOM SATYAGRAHA ONE THOUSAND. WILL REFUND. PROPOSE COMING MARCH GOING VYKOM. DURING MARCH MUST I TRAVEL OTHER PARTS PRESIDENCY.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

93. TELEGRAM TO LAJPAT RAI[2]

February 23, 1925

I MUST NOT POSTPONE WITHOUT REFERENCE MEETING[3] BUT MEETING MAY POSTPONE IF DESIRABLE. HOPE YOU ARE FULLY RESTORED.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

[1] Chakravarti Rajagopalachari (b. 1879); author and statesman, Governor-General of India, 1948-50

[2] This was in reply to the telegram from Lajpat Rai received on February 23, 1925, which read: "Iyengar Jayakar Jairamdas and others unable attend 28th. No date before third week March suitable. Please arrange postponement and wire."

[3] *Vide* "Statement on Adjournment of All-Party Conference Sub-Committee", 2-3-1925.

94. TELEGRAM TO A. T. GIDWANI[1]

[*February 23, 1925*]

GIDWANI
HINDU COLLEGE
DELHI

CONGRATULATIONS. SELF REACHING DELHI SATURDAY. START TODAY IF POSSIBLE OR STAY TILL MY ARRIVAL.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

95. TELEGRAM TO MOTILAL NEHRU[2]

[SABARMATI,
February 23, 1925]

WIRED LALAJI. CANNOT POSTPONE WITHOUT REFER[ENCE] MEETING WHICH MUST MEET.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

96. LETTER TO SHAUKAT ALI

SABARMATI,
February 23, 1925

MY DEAR FRIEND & BROTHER,

I have read today your commentary on my statement on Kohat. I honour you and love you all the more for your outspokenness. But your commentary shows how with all the detachment

[1] Acharya Gidwani, who went to jail in 1924 for accompanying a *shahidi jatha* to Jaito, had been released by the Nabha authorities on February 22 and was staying at Delhi with the Principal of the Hindu College. *Vide* "Notes", 26-2-1925, sub-little, "Acharya Gidwani Released".

[2] This was in reply to the telegram from Motilal Nehru received on February 23 which repeated Lajpat Rai's telegram; *vide* footnote 2 on preceding page.

and impartiality in the world sometimes people most closely related as we are can come to opposite conclusions on identical facts. It makes me more charitable than ever towards opponents and more distrustful of my judgment even than I am. I have twice read your commentary and I see the wide gulf that separates us in the affair. I am prepared to strongly condemn the publication of the poem but I am unable to condone the looting and arson. I do not endorse your opinion that the pamphlet was the cause of the conflagration. The ground was already prepared. I cannot treat the conversions as lightly as you seem to do. In my opinion the Khilafatists have greatly neglected their duty and Maulvi Ahmed Gul certainly betrayed the trust reposed in him.

I do not say these things to influence your opinion if there is no cause for it. But I do want you to look more deeply into the facts than you have done and see whether there is cause for reconsideration. I tremble to publish our statements. The publication will give rise to an acrimonious discussion. I would therefore even suggest the whole matter being examined by Hakim Saheb or Dr. Ansari. I would love to have new light on the question. I would like all the friends to look at the facts and try to influence us both. But if after we have exhausted all our resources to come to a joint conclusion, we fail, we must dare to let the public know our difference of opinion and know too that we shall still love one another and work together. But that very love demands that we take no hasty action. Are you coming to Delhi? If you are, let us travel together. I leave by the meter-gauge on 27th. But if you are coming and you would rather leave by the Punjab Mail I would join you at Baroda. It may be advisable to have leisurely discussion between us. The train seems to be the best place for such discussion. Do let me know what you would like to do. Please wire if possible. I am not publishing the statement this week.

With love,

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

I am glad you are taking Kuhne treatment. You certainly need plenty of exercise.

M. K. G.

From a photostat: S.N. 10524

97. TELEGRAM TO REVASHANKER ZAVERI

February 25, 1925

MORALITY[1]
[BOMBAY]

PRABHASHANKER REFUSES CELEBRATE MARRIAGE WITHOUT YOUR PRESENCE.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

98. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

February 25, 1925

MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI
94, BAZAR GATE STREET
BOMBAY

BOOK TWO SEATS BARODA DELHI WITH SHAUKAT ALI FOR THURSDAY.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

99. TELEGRAM TO RAGHUBIR SINGH

[February 25, 1925][2]

RUGHBIR SINGH[3]
KASHMIRI GATE
DELHI

REACHING FRIDAY NIGHT NAGDA MAIL.

GANDHI

From a draft in Gandhiji's hand: S. N. 2456

[1] Telegraphic address of Revashanker Zaveri
[2] This was sent on the same day as "Telegram to Mathuradas Trikumji", 25-2-1925.
[3] Secretary of the Modern School, Delhi

100. TELEGRAM TO DR. M. A. ANSARI

February 25, 1925

DR. ANSARI
DARYAGUNJ
DELHI

REACHING FRIDAY NIGHT NAGDA MAIL. INFORM HAKIMJI MAHOMEDALI PRESUME SHOULD STAY RAGHUBIRSINGH.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

101. TELEGRAM TO CHAUNDE MAHARAJ

February 25, 1925

CHAUNDE MAHARAJ[1]
WAI

REACHING DELHI FRIDAY. ARE YOU COMING.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

102. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
Phagan Sud 3 [February 25, 1925][2]

CHI. FULCHAND,

I have your letter. What you say is quite correct. In our lives, exaggeration and slander have grown rife.

Your writing to Pattani Saheb would in itself be sufficient atonement.

Write a nice letter and send it to me. I shall forward it to him.

[1] A sadhu of Maharashtra who devoted his life to cow-protection

[2] From the postmark

I wish to see the wording of your letter. Did you see those three gentlemen again? It would be very nice if the citizens join you.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2825. Courtesy: Sharadabehn Shah

103. SPEECH AT AHMEDABAD[1]

February 25, 1925

Prayer time is the best time for words of blessing. On two earlier occasions, when young people who grew up in the Ashram were married off, many among us did not appreciate the significance of the occasion. Whoever comes to the Ashram, whether children or married men, would like to observe *brahmacharya*; and, therefore, how can marriage be solemnized in the Ashram where the aim is to encourage everyone in the observance of *brahmacharya*? It is natural that the question should arise in the minds of many people; and yet three marriages came to be solemnized here. Though the regulations of the Ashram are strict, we are unable to enforce discipline. It is not easy to impart training in *brahmacharya* to young persons. Not that older folk are able to observe *brahmacharya* strictly. To fulfil an ideal, one should have ardour in one's heart. The subject is so profound that the more I delve into it, the more awe-inspiring it seems and I see its beauty and drink deep of its delights.

We can't use force on the young people whom we keep in the Ashram. It happens sometimes that marriages cannot be avoided. There were three such cases. In order to pacify my mind I took the one way out. The ceremonial should be performed outside the precincts of the Ashram. One should get married without deceiving the inner self or the outer world. And then one should come to the Ashram and receive everyone's blessings.

If marry one must, it should not be to indulge the senses but to practise self-control—this must be made clear to the married couple as well as the inmates of the Ashram. Inmates should not eagerly look forward to wedding occasions. It is a different matter if they can't be avoided. That is an event linking the soul

[1] Blessing the couple on the occasion of the marriage of Dahyabhai Patel. *Vide* also "My Notes", 29-3-1925.

and God. That is why in English the soul is feminine in gender. Jaydev has also descried the soul as a feminine entity sporting with the Supreme Being. Little remains to be done in this world after such marriage of spirits. If marriages must take place even when this union of souls does not obtain, well, let it be so. It is necessary for me to tell you on this, the fourth, occasion that marriage is not meant for greed but for sacrifice. Resolve that even if you wish to derive sense pleasure from this relationship, you will do so within limits. Among us the rule of fidelity is meant for women only, though the last four morsels given to [the couple] while solemnizing the marriage stand for the union of flesh, spirit and bone. It is a pity we did not lay down a similar rule for men. Therefore I can only say that you must live in moderation and realize that the pleasures of the body should be only a means of procreation.

Who has the right to give birth to a child in these terrible times? Countless persons in India observe *brahmacharya* and many in Europe as well. Among Roman Catholics, there are many adult men and women who observe *brahmacharya* throughout their life. An eighteen-year-old girl walks out of worldly life and observes unbroken *brahmacharya*. They have monastries and nunneries where such men and women live. In these hard times no one in India has the right to beget children. No one has at any time the right to bear children before one is strong enough.

I wanted the marriage to be solemnized in the Ashram, because the priest performing the rites would explain their significance and you could thus learn that marriage is not a matter of pleasure but of self-control. Both of you, therefore, should understand this occasion and remember it. I have taken upon myself one responsibility and I will never regret it. The result is bound to be beneficent. You know my relations with Vallabhbhai. He asked me of his own free will that this marriage be solemnized by me. Kashibhai was also favourable to the idea. There is no need for spending lots of money on a marriage. It is penance that is needed. Outside the Ashram a marriage cannot take place without money being spent, for you cannot have only the religious rite, leaving out things like *barat*[1]. That is why the marriage has been solemnized here. The seed that is sown will grow into a tree. But be worthy of your parents to nurture that seed and eschew worldly pleasures. For not spending money, the motive was not stinginess, and it certainly was not greed. Such expenditure

[1] Marriage party

bears heavily on the *Patidar* families and our intention was to save them from it altogether.

I have known Dahyabhai for a long time and Yashoda too. I feel confident that they are strong enough through self-control to add lustre to this marriage. All these things which I say to inmates of the Ashram cannot be said too often. I do not mean to seek out such occasions, for that is not my vocation. But if they arise, I perform the ceremonies in the hope that self-control can be strengthened thus. This may well be an illusion. I do not wish not to take the chance if it comes. But I wish for all of you that you develop more self-control through such occasions. That is why we are all assembled here. Let us pray to God that we may attain our ideals and we may bring up men and women here who do not think about marriage and procreation, but who regard all children as their own, and who spend their lives in serving children who have no sunshine in their lives. Dahyabhai and Yashoda must think for themselves and realize how great is their responsibility. It seems to me as if they have lost their freedom today. But this state too can be beautiful. Let them be happy and restrained. Let them breathe the spirit of sacrifice and be worthy of their parents and also of us; so that no one may feel like asking why this marriage was celebrated in the Ashram.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 202-5

104. THE EMBARGO

I publish the following telegraphic correspondence between the Private Secretary to H.E. the Viceroy and myself:

TELEGRAM TO THE PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE VICEROY[1]

REPLY TO THE ABOVE[2]

SECOND TELEGRAM TO PRIVATE SECRETARY TO THE VICEROY[3]

REPLY TO THE ABOVE[4]

It is quite true that my going to Kohat is likely to reopen the settlement in so far as it is intrinsically bad. It is a settlement brought about by coercion, for it has been arrived at under threat of prosecutions on either side. It is not a voluntary

[1] & [2] *Vide* "Telegram to Private Secretary to Viceroy", 9-2-1925.

[3] & [4] *Vide* "Telegram to Private Secretary to Viceroy", 19-2-1925.

settlement that pleases the parties. Both the Hindus and the Mussalmans whom Maulana Shaukat Ali and I met at Rawalpindi said as much. But my visit to Kohat, whatever else it may or may not bring about, can never mean greater estrangement between the parties. If, therefore, I had been permitted together with Mussalman friends to proceed to Kohat it would have meant furtherance of peace which the Viceroy claims to have at heart equally with me. Whilst, therefore, I was able somewhat to understand the refusal when the things were still in a ferment, I am unable to understand the prohibition at the present moment. Friends were not wanting who suggested that I should have proceeded to Kohat without permission or intimation and taken the risk of a prohibition order. I could not do so unless I meant to disobey any such order and court imprisonment. And as I hold that there is no atmosphere at the present moment in the country for any such step I could not take the proposed risk. I can only hope that the authorities will appreciate the deliberation with which I am avoiding every step that may precipitate civil resistance. My purpose so far as it is humanly possible is to avoid taking a single step that may even indirectly precipitate violence on the part of the people. But a time must come when non-violent resistance on my part may become a duty in total disregard of untoward consequences. I do not myself know when such a time can or will come. I know that it is a possibility. But when that time comes I hope that friends will not find me wanting. Till then I must ask them to bear with me.

Young India, 26-2-1925

105. INHUMAN IF TRUE

Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee sends me the following telegram:

> Reports from Nabha just received give harrowing details of inhuman tortures including wholesale merciless beating to unconsciousness, dragging by *keshas* (hair) and beards, ducking into water, putting hot iron rods on various parts of body and hanging by their feet heads downward, resulting in several deaths at the spot. Many more are in a precarious condition. A large number is seriously wounded. No ration issued on 13th and 14th to some *jathas*[1]. Great excitement prevails. Situation extremely serious. Immediate action necessary.

[1] Bands of satyagrahis

I print the telegram, but alas! what immediate action can be taken? Of public sympathy the prisoners can be sure. I have little doubt that there will be questions and usual answers in the Assembly but of what use will they be to the sufferers? I can only hope that the picture is overdrawn and that the authorities are not guilty of the inhumanities ascribed to them. I trust that the Administrator of Nabha will give a full explanation about the awful charges brought against the prison authorities and court an impartial inquiry into the allegations.

Young India, 26-2-1925

106. MORE ABOUT VYKOM

The following letter will be read with painful interest by those Hindus who look upon untouchability as a crime:

> We have seen your article[1] in *Young India* about us. It is our fervent prayer that we do really deserve the high terms in which you have been kind enough to characterize our activities here. On reading it we have become to some extent depressed by the sense of our own shortcomings and we are striving our utmost to come up to the level which will satisfy you when you come here and see things actually for yourself.
>
> In the meantime the local Legislative Council has thrown out "our resolution" by a majority of 22 to 21 votes. The Government majority was made up of 15 officials, 3 nominated members, one Brahmin representative of vested interests and three elected members. The constitution of the Council is 15 officials, 7 nominated non-officials and 28 elected non-officials. So of the 35 non-officials 21 voted for us, two stood neutral, 7 against us and the rest were absent. And of the 7 who voted against us, as already stated three alone were elected from the general electorate. It is clear from the facts stated above that the Government, far from taking a neutral attitude, actually went the length of canvassing against the resolution. You may remember that, the Regent Maharani in her reply to the caste Hindu *jatha* expressed a desire to know the attitude of the councils before doing anything in the matter. Then we had expected that the Government would at least have kept a neutral attitude. But now we find that it is not so. It has now become clear that the Government is to a large extent acting as the real opposition where enlightened opinion is in favour of reform.
>
> But what, however, I wished to bring to your notice is this. The result of the resolution in the Council may prove the last straw on the camel's

[1] *Vide* "Vykom Satyagraha", 19-2-1925.

back. There are signs everywhere of an impatience at the gentle and "slow" method of satyagraha. Even responsible leaders may fall victims to the general restlessness. So if it is absolutely impossible for you to go over here in the near future, it must be at least possible for you to issue an authoritative statement regarding the implications of satyagraha. Such a statement coming from you is bound to have the healthiest effect on minds that have begun to waver in the face of the present heavy odds. Some people have begun to advocate social ostracism of the high castes, non-co-operation and so many other methods, all of which are more or less dangerous in the present state of our society.

Considerable strength of mind and perseverance is required now even to manage the Camp. But this is not the real difficulty. The matrix in which satyagraha flourished is the general communal consciousness and I only point out that after ten months of satyagraha when people realize that the Travancore Council has thrown out the "Freedom of Road" resolution, there is either a tendency to take to extreme steps or to completely collapse. Of these I am only afraid of the first and that is why I request that a message, clearly conveying to them all the implications of satyagraha, how though seemingly dilatory in its working yet it is the quickest agent for success, and how other methods are less useful if not positively harmful, especially in a "communal problem", etc., is highly necessary. I hope you will find time to do so.

That a State reported to be advanced should work in opposition to progressive opinion is a sad commentary on its "advanced" state. The progressives really won the battle from a moral standpoint. Whilst it is regrettable that 22 should have voted against the use by the so-called untouchables of the public road in question, it is consoling to find that 21 members vindicated the position taken by the Hindu reformers by voting in favour of their resolution. The saddest part of the letter, however, is the fact that the satyagrahis seem to be losing hope. I do not wonder. Theirs is the first experience of sustained satyagraha. Let me, however, assure them that victory is assured. For their cause is just, their means non-violent. Let them realize, too, that by their sufferings they have attracted the attention of the world. Whoever knew Vykom before the struggle commenced? They should also know that they are fighting an age-long superstition. What is a year's suffering on the part of a few reformers in their attempt to break down the iron wall of prejudice? To lose patience is to lose the battle. They must fight to the finish. What is the alternative anyone can have in view? The breaking of heads will not serve the purpose. Orthodoxy will stiffen its back and will suck nourishment out of the blood of its martyrs. For if the orthodox

are injured, sympathy will irresistibly be drawn towards them though their cause is wrong. To attempt to force the entry will invite stronger barricades. And even if force succeeded, it would merely mean mechanical use of a single public road and not change of opinion.

What, however, the Hindu reformers want is the conversion of the orthodox people who have made of untouchability a religion. This they will only do by sufferings such as they are now undergoing. Satyagraha is the shortest cut to success. All the reforms that have been brought about by violent methods have taken not one year but years. The victory of enlightenment over darkness in Europe was a long and torturing process. And one is not sure that it was a lasting success. There was no conversion of those who opposed and died. The others who were converted were attracted by the sufferings of those who died even whilst inflicting death on their opponents. The net legacy that age bequeathed the world was a confirmation of belief in methods of violence. I hope therefore that the satyagrahis of Vykom will not swerve from their path even though their ranks may be thinned and victory may seem further off than ever. Satyagraha is utter self-effacement, greatest humiliation, greatest patience and brightest faith. It is its own reward.

Young India, 26-2-1925

107. NOTES

28TH FEBRUARY

The Sub-Committee appointed by the All-Parties Conference Committee is to meet once more on the 28th instant at Delhi. No Sub-Committee had perhaps a more difficult task before it. The Sub-Committee redivided itself into two groups, one for drafting a skeleton swaraj seheme and the other for framing a skeleton Hindu-Muslim Unity scheme. Dr. Besant was Chairman of the Swaraj group of the Sub-Committee and she has already presented a report for the consideration of the Sub-Committee. The adjournment took place for the consideration of the Hindu-Muslim question as no agreement could be reached last time, and as the desire was expressed that the members then present should be able to confer with those who were absent and those others who though not members might be able to assist in reaching an agreement. It is to be hoped that those who can

will attend the forthcoming meeting. Lala Lajpat Rai has telegraphed asking me to postpone the meeting to a date after the third week of March. Several members have informed him that they will not be able to attend. I have informed him[1] saying that I could not postpone without reference to the meeting itself and that the meeting might postpone if it was thought desirable. Everybody has by this time made up his mind as to what should be done. No new light would possibly be thrown on the question at the forthcoming meeting. The only question for consideration would be whether there is a middle course between the two extremes that were discussed at Delhi at the last meeting. That leads to another question. Is there a will on the part of both the parties to find an immediate solution? The swaraj scheme is also a tremendously important problem. Only, the Hindu-Muslim question seems to block all progress. I do hope that all who are at all able will come and assist the deliberations. I would advise the absentees to send in their opinions lest the meeting should decide to continue its deliberations instead of postponing as suggested by Lalaji.

Acharya Gidwani Released

The reader will share with me the joy of reading the following telegram received on Monday morning from Ambala:

> Gidwani released yesterday evening sentence being suspended again. Administrator's order states facts correctly this time. Administrator sent word through his brother Alim Gidwani, who went to see him on the 8th instant to ask for appointment for Mrs. Gidwani that if Gidwani did not interfere in Nabha politics he could go away that day. Gidwani sent word that if that meant obedience to externment order he had no intention of disobeying it when he came and none in future. Mrs. Gidwani brought word on the 11th that that was what Administrator required, when Gidwani sent immediately following letter: "Mrs. Gidwani tells me that you desire some assurance from me that I have no intention of disobeying your externment order. I have not the slightest hesitation in giving you that assurance. When I started from Amritsar last year I had no intention of disobeying the order when I wrote to you for permission to enter Jaito. As I explained in my written statement on 8th March 1924, I had fully intended to abide by your decision; my friends tell me that you did not get that letter in time which perhaps explains the unfortunate misunderstanding. The Congress position and Mr. Gandhi's wishes in the matter which I had ascertained personally before starting required me to obey the order and my future course of action will of course be the same,

[1] *Vide* "Telegram to Lajpat Rai", 23-2-1925.

obeying the order until it is withdrawn." Administrator left for Delhi on 12th morning returned on 15th and had to go immediately to Jaito returning again on 21st night. The suspension order came at 4 a.m. on 22nd. Gidwani proceeding Delhi tonight staying with Principal, Hindu College, awaiting Mahatmaji's instructions.

I rejoice to have the news of Acharya Gidwani's release because his imprisonment was a gross injustice and because that injustice has been redressed. Truly the ways of the Nabha authorities are strange. What they have now received from the Acharya they could have had long ago. In fact as has been repeatedly pointed out in these columns, Acharya Gidwani never entered the Nabha boundary in order to defy orders. He entered purely and simply in order to perform a humanitarian service. But neither the nation nor the Acharya has lost by the imprisonment. It is the necessary training for swaraj and the price that one must pay for liberty.

Stoning to Death

I have a long telegram sent to me as President of the National Congress regarding the stoning to death in Afghanistan of two members of the Ahmediya sect. I purposely refrained from any comment on the awful penalty imposed on the late Niamatulla Khan but I dare not ignore the incidents now reported especially when a personal appeal for expression of opinion is made to me. I understand that the stoning method is enjoined in the Koran only in certain circumstances which do not cover the cases under observation. But as a human being living in the fear of God I should question the morality of the method under any circumstance whatsoever. Whatever may have been necessary or permissible during the Prophet's lifetime and in that age, this particular form of penalty cannot be defended on the mere ground of its mention in the Koran. Every formula of every religion has in this age of reason, to submit to the acid test of reason and universal justice if it is to ask for universal assent. Error can claim no exemption even if it can be supported by the scriptures of the world. I extend my sympathy to the sect in its distress. Needless to say I can express no opinion on the merits of the case. I do not think the public has any data for forming an opinion on merits. It is the form of penalty that wounds the human conscience. Both reason and heart refuse to reconcile themselves to torture for any crime, no matter how vile the crime may be.

Some Posers

"A well-wisher" sends these lines for my meditation:

> The Bible can be read in 566 languages. In how many can the Upanishads and the *Gita?*
>
> How many leper asylums and institutions for the depressed and the distressed have the missionaries? How many have you?

It is usual for me to receive such posers. "A well-wisher" deserves an answer. I have great regard for the missionaries for their zeal and self-sacrifice. But I have not hesitated to point out to them that both are often misplaced. What though the Bible were translated in every tongue in the world? Is a patent medicine better than the Upanishads for being advertised in more languages than the Upanishads? An error does not become truth by reason of multipled propagation, nor does truth become error because nobody will see it. The Bible was a greater power when the early fathers preached it than it is today. "A well-wisher" has little conception of the way truth works, if he thinks that the translation of the Bible in more languages than the Upanishads is any test of its superiority. Truth has to be lived if it is to fructify. But if it is any satisfaction to "A well-wisher" to have my answer I may gladly tell him that the Upanishads and the *Gita* have been translated into far fewer languages than the Bible. I have never been curious enough to know in how many languages they are translated.

As for the second question, too, I must own that the missionaries have founded many leper asylums and the like. I have founded none. But I stand unmoved. I am not competing with the missionaries or anybody else in such matters. I am trying humbly to serve humanity as God leads me. The founding of leper asylums, etc., is only one of the ways, and perhaps not the best, of serving humanity. But even such noble service loses much of its nobility when conversion is the motive behind it. That service is the noblest which is rendered for its own sake. But let me not be misunderstood. The missionaries that selflessly work away in such asylums command my respect. I am ashamed to have to confess that Hindus have become so callous as to care little for the waifs and strays of India, let alone the world.

A Superstition

A Bengal zamindar sends me a long letter dealing with Hindu-Muslim unity, untouchability and swaraj. The letter is too long for publication and covers no new ground. I cull, however, one typical sentence from it. It is:

> For over 500 years the relation between Hindus and Mussalmans was that of foes. After the advent of British rule both the Mussalmans and Hindus

> were compelled out of policy to forget that racial hatred and the acrimony of that bitter enmity is now no more. But the permanent difference in the constitution of these two races does even now exist. I believe the present cordial relation is due to British rule and not to the catholicity of modern Hinduism.

I regard this statement as pure superstition. The two races lived at peace among themselves during the Mussalman rule. Let it be remembered that many Hindus embraced Islam before the advent of Muslim rule in India. It is my belief that had there been no Muslim rule, there would still have been Mussalmans in India even as there would have been Christians had there been no British rule. There is nothing to prove that Hindus and Mussalmans lived at war with one another before the British rule. My belief is that the British policy of "divide and rule" has accentuated our differences and will continue to do so, till we recognize that we must unite in spite of the policy. This cannot and will not happen unless we refrain from a scramble for place and power. The beginning must be made by the Hindus.

Bharucha's Diary

Here is a record of Mr. Bharucha's work:

> Am touring in East Khandesh with Messrs Dastane and Deva. Here is the diary:
>
> 13-2-25 Bhusaval—Khadi Rs. 350 sold principally to lawyers and cotton collection 12 Bengali maunds.
>
> 14-2-25 Jamner—Cotton collection 16½ Bengali maunds.
>
> 15-2-25 Chalisgaon—Khadi sold to lawyers Rs. 310/- and to cloth-merchants Rs. 450/-. Cotton collection 1 Bengali maund.
>
> 16-2-25 Pachora—Cotton collection 12 Maunds and at Sindurni 5 maunds pucka Bengali.
>
> 17-2-25 Today we are at Yaval. Mr. Dastane wants three days more for West Khandesh, i.e., up to 23rd instant.

I reproduce this extract from one of Mr. Bharucha's letters as spur to action by the other workers. Not without business-like and continuous effort is success possible in the spinning and khaddar propaganda. My experience is that wherever there is work put in, the response is quick.

India's Plight

Mr. Higginbottom of the Agricultural Institute of Allahabad was examined by the Taxation Inquiry Committee on the 6th instant when he gave expression to interesting opinions on several

matters of importance. I cull the following from the *Civil and Military Gazette*:

> India, while being poor, is the most extravagant country on the face of the earth in matters of agriculture. The extreme poverty in the land is not so much due to want of either land or material for agriculture but want of a scientific system of agriculture. The existence of numerous uneconomic cattle and religious mendicants are the source of a fearful economic drain on the country. There are far too many cattle for food supply, and there are too many cattle for the work to be done. Lack of food reduces the size and value of cattle. Lack of food and the refusal to eliminate unfit ones has led to the Indian cow giving the least amount of milk of any cow on the earth. Indian milk is most expensive to produce and over 90 per cent of the cattle in this country is an economic loss. . . .
>
> The most expensive manure, which is difficult to get, is being burnt by the people.
>
> The potential taxability of India is very great, but her present taxable capacity is very low. The burden of the land tax is very much lower than what it ought to be. Land revenue in India is burdensome when the holding is smaller than an economic holding.
>
> Legislation is necessary for abolishing uneconomic holdings. The present legislation was putting a premium on small farming. The size of a holding is seldom sufficiently large for the use of labour-saving machinery. The present state of legislation is making all economic holdings to become a number of uneconomic holdings. There is absence of a proper system of village industries to take care of the surplus people. Further the land is asked to provide a whole-time living for a very large number of men and animals who can work on it only for half the time. The remedy is to devise and develop rural seasonal industries for men, women and oxen so that they can be gainfully occupied for a portion of the time when the land does not require their services.
>
> The landlord regards his income as personal, and does not consider the improvement of the countryside as his gain. Moreover, tenants and landlords are eternally at war.

These extracts deal with four things. Waste of valuable manure, the distressing problem of cattle, uneconomic holdings and want of occupation for the peasantry all the year round. All these, apart from the burden of taxation, deepen the poverty of the masses and deserve consideration at the hands of all patriots. Everyone of them is capable of being handled in an effective manner. In a country where the cow is an object of worship, there should be no cattle problem at all. But our cow-worship

has resolved itself into an ignorant fanaticism. The fact that we have more cattle than we can support is a matter for urgent treatment. I have already suggested the taking over of the question by cow-protection societies. It is their legitimate function. The question of uneconomic holdings requires revision of the family system. The question of wanton destruction of manure requires a true agricultural education and that of unemployment for half the year for millions of men and women can only be solved by the spinning-wheel. It is clear that to the fight with the Government we must add a scientific study and handling of the problems discussed by Mr. Sam Higginbottom.

Young India, 26-2-1925

108. SPINNING PROSPECTS IN ORISSA

Mr. Shankerlal Banker sends from Calcutta an account of his tour in Orissa. I give below a free translation of his letter[1].

Young India, 26-2-1925

109. TELEGRAM TO ARYA, RANGOON

February 26, 1925

ARYA
RANGOON

RATILAL CHAMPA MARRIAGE CELEBRATED HAPPY AUSPICES WITH FULL RELIGIOUS RITES.

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

[1] Not reproduced here. It dealt with the difficulties and the potentialities of khadi work in Orissa. *Vide* also "My Notes", 22-2-1925, sub-title, "Khadi in Utkal".

110. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI[1]

En route DELHI,
February 27, 1925

DEAR FRIEND & BHRR. . .[2]

Why worry about nothing. Had I written to you in English probably you would have read the postcard correctly. I have always your heart hug. What matters *it* whether I have the body *hug* or not? I will not misunderstand you. I knew you were confused. Remember me to Rehana[3].

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 9551

111. LETTER TO S. V. BAPAT[4]

February 27, 1925

I have your letter. "Much wants more and loses all." Pray excuse me.

M. K. GANDHI

S. V. BAPAT
"KESARI-MAHRATTA" OFFICE
POONA

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] 1853-1936; judge of the Baroda High Court; Gandhiji's friend and lieutenant in the non-co-operation movement

[2] A form of greeting used between Gandhiji and the addressee whenever they met or wrote to each other

[3] Addressee's daughter

[4] This seems to be in reply to the addressee's request for Gandhiji's reminiscences of Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

112. TELEGRAM TO ABDUL MAJID

DELHI,
February 28, 1925

KHWAJA SAHEB
ABDUL MAJID
ALIGARH

EXPECT YOU HERE TOMORROW MORNING WITHOUT FAIL. I MAY BE LEAVING TOMORROW EVENING.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

113. TELEGRAM TO ANANDANANDA

DELHI,
February 28, 1925

SWAMI ANANDANANDA[1]
AHMEDABAD

CAN GIVE YOU FULL TIME 26TH MARCH. WILL IT DO. OTHERWISE AM PREPARED COME AHMEDABAD BEFORE GOING MADRAS.

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

114. LETTER TO DR. MANCREVOUR

February 28, 1925

I thank you for your letter. My belief in satyagraha and non-violence is as green as ever. I am myself still practising non-co-operation and so are thousands of men and women of India. The agreement with those who differ from me is to suspend non-co-operation as a national programme. This suspension leaves those who wish free to enter the legislative councils of this country.

M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] Then Manager of Navajivan Press, Ahmedabad

115. LETTER TO SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI

Phagan Sud 6, Samvat 1981 [February 28, 1925]

SUJNA BHAISHRI,

I have your letter. My programme is as follows:—

Ashram	March 4
Bombay	March 5
Madras	March 7
Vykom	March 8

The programme after that will be decided in Vykom. I expect to return to the Ashram on 26th March. I have to be at Botad on the 1st April and then I have to go to Madhada, Palitana, Sihor, etc.

Now I can see the Jam Saheb only after my return from Vykom; I would come to Bombay, provided he goes there.

Herewith Bhai Fulchand's letter. I have a very high opinion of him. This is an example of how the best of men are deceived by rumours. I am sure you will forgive Bhai Fulchand. When he of his own accord wrote to me saying that he would apologize I asked him to send the letter of apology to me.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 3197. Courtesy: Mahesh Pattani

116. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

Phagan Sud 6, 1981 [February 28, 1925]

BHAI FULCHAND,

I have your letter. I have forwarded it[1] to Pattani Saheb. I got your second letter too. I shall reply to it publicly without mentioning any names.[2] I fail to understand the propriety of the rule that we ought not to dine at a drunkard's house.

Don't I go to people who do not wear khadi? The cause of prohibition would gain nothing directly by my doing as you suggest. Our not drinking despite going to his place does help it.

[1] *Vide* the preceding item.

[2] *Vide* "What Should Be Done Where Liquor Is Being Served?", 22-3-1925.

If we would have no such relations, we should leave society altogether.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2870. Courtesy: Sharadabehn Shah

117. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Phagan Sud 6, 1981 [February 28, 1925]

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

The charkha that I got specially made for you has arrived. It is certainly very fine to look at. Bhai Mahadev and I have both tried it; it works very well. I wonder if anyone at our place can set it up properly. Please let me know how it works. I had asked Chi. Maganlal to send one more charkha; I do not know if it has reached you. You must have received my previous letter. I am proceeding to Vykom.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 1606. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

118. REMINISCENCES OF KATHIAWAR–I

PEOPLE'S REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY

The memories of my visit to Kathiawar, which lasted from the 15th to 21st, will ever remain fresh in my mind. I was delighted to see the independence displayed by the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot. I had my misgivings about the usefulness of the People's Representative Assembly, but my presence during this body's deliberations for three hours dispelled them. The ultimate benefit from this organization would be known only in the future but it can be said that it is useful even in its present form. It rests with the representatives to increase its utility. The representatives have complete freedom to express themselves and they were seen exercising this to the full. Nobody seemed to worry about what views the Thakore Saheb would approve. The representatives expressed even such views as were likely to offend the Thakore Saheb.

As the proceedings were conducted in Gujarati, the atmosphere was lively. Here was none of the artificiality, snobbery,

and so on that one finds in English speeches. Some speeches, one could say, were excellent and effective. The speeches did not drag on and most of them were to the point. I would not consider this council inferior to any other assembly in respect of debating ability, self-restraint and orderly procedure.

Prohibition was the main topic discussed by the Assembly. It unanimously passed a resolution to the effect that the Durbar should ban the distillation of liquor. The representatives knew that the Thakore Saheb was opposed to this resolution. And yet it was passed a second time.

A Flaw in Argument

The Thakore Saheb had himself argued with the representatives. Hence his views on this subject could be known. He argued that if drink shops were banned, individual liberty would be curtailed. I think that there is a great flaw in this argument. It is difficult to understand how individual liberty is curtailed if liquor shops are closed down. People did not want drinking to be considered a crime, but they wanted a ban on the preparation and sale of liquor. No society or individual is entitled to prepare or sell a thing if it is considered harmful by them. Everyone is aware of the harm done by drinking. As there can be no liberty for anyone to steal, there can be none to distil or sell liquor. Those who cannot do without liquor may transgress the law. Many instances of such restrictions are found even in countries where individual liberty is cherished. Liberty and license are not the same thing. One cannot have the license to act as one pleases. If such license exists, then the goddess of liberty can never stay there. Everyone has the right to enjoy as much liberty as will not harm others. There is a legal maxim[1] in English that one should use one's property in such a way that others are not injured. I have every right to dig up my whole plot of land but I cannot dig it so that the foundation of my neighbour's house is damaged. If a section of the people drinks wine, the evil consequences are not suffered by the drinkers alone but their children and neighbours also suffer. America has closed down drink shops and breweries. That has not resulted in the curtailment of individual liberty. When the whole world loudly protests against the drink trade, it is regrettable that the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot is defending individual liberty to drink.

[1] A Latin legal maxim, *Sic utere tuo ut alienum non laedars* which means: "Use your property in such a way as not to damage that of others."

PUBLIC OPINION

Assuming that the ban on the drink trade would curtail individual liberty, even then, if the people clearly hold a unanimous view, it is the duty of the ruler to act according to the wishes of the people. That is a principle recognized all over the world. There was no one in the People's Representative Assembly who did not desire a ban on the drink trade. There is evidence to show that the addicts themselves desire such a ban. Their families have suffered. It will be regrettable if the Thakore Saheb does not respect the wishes of the people in this matter. The ruler has taken the initiative in forming the People's Representative Assembly, and I would expect that he will not disregard the people's wish clinging to wrong reasoning and that he will earn the sincere blessings of the poor by banning the drink trade.

REGULARITY

The Thakore Saheb of Rajkot is a stickler for regularity. He does all his work at the appointed hour and diligently goes through all his appointments, and makes others do the same. He loves discipline. He believes that our greatest drawback is lack of discipline. That this is very much so cannot be denied. The people are not able to fulfil their good intentions for want of rules and discipline.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 1-3-1925

119. SILENCE DAY NOTES TO STEN KONOW[1]

[March 2, 1925][2]

I am sorry that I am silent. But you can say what you wish to. I will answer by writing. I am very busy editing *Young India*—but I will spare a few minutes.

INFLUENCE OF CHARKHA

It is not so much the individual I have in view as the nation. The effect of spinning on the individual may be imperceptible but its effect on the nation will be very considerable

[1] 1867-1948; Norwegian Indologist, epigraphist and publicist, visiting professor at Santiniketan, 1924-25. These notes were written by Gandhiji in reply to Konow's questions. The sub-headings are in someone else's hand.

[2] From the addressee

even as the work of a single soldier plodding at a trench may be nothing, but the cumulative effect of thousands working at it may turn the scale.

POSITION OF BROWBEATING SECTION OF INDEPENDENTS

They threaten to take a leading part. But they will not succeed. India's heart is not that way. What you have seen of brutality is, I hope, confined to a very narrow group.

POSSIBILITY OF AMICABLE SETTLEMENT WITH ENGLAND

Certainly there is every possibility. I am working to that end. But the thing largely depends upon English conduct as a whole.

From a photostat: C.W. 5993. Courtesy: Prof. George Morgenstierne

120. TELEGRAM TO ANANDANANDA

March 2, 1925

SWAMI
"NAVAJIVAN"
AHMEDABAD

OVER TEN COLUMNS POSTED TWO SECTIONS TO REACH TUESDAY. REACHING THERE WEDNESDAY. MUST LEAVE FOR BOMBAY SAME DAY. INFORM VALLABHBHAI ASHRAM.

BAPU

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

121. TELEGRAM TO JAYASHANKER WAGHJI

DELHI,
March 2, 1925

JAYASHANKER WAGHJI
JAMNAGAR

REACHING BOMBAY THURSDAY MORNING. LEAVING SAME NIGHT FOR VYKOM.

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

122. TELEGRAM TO DR. VARADARAJULU NAIDU

March 2, 1925

VARADARAJULU NAIDU[1]

IING CAN BE FIXED BEFORE REACHING VYKOM. HING MADRAS PROBABLY SATURDAY. LEAVING DAY FOR VYKOM.

GANDHI

'rom a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

123. LETTER TO BIRENDRANATH SEN GUPTA

March 2, 1925

FRIEND,

I kept your letter by me all this time. I can see nothing xcept in Maulana Mahomed Ali's statement.[2] May not a seven feet tall say of another five feet in height that the er is superior to the latter in height, although the latter is ior to the former in every other respect? May not the lana truthfully say that he is superior to the so-called great- ian in the world in so far at least as the Maulana believes a on which in his opinion is the best of all? I think the Mau- has legitimately drawn the contrast.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

'rom the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan

A member of the Congress Working Committee
Mahomed Ali had said: "As a follower of Islam I am bound to regard ed of Islam as superior to that professed by the followers of any non- religion. And in this sense the creed of even a fallen and degraded man is entitled to a higher place than that of any other non-Muslim ctive of his character, even though the person in question be Mahatma i himself." *Vide* Vol. XXIII, p. 568.

DEAR M
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124. LETTER TO FAZL-I-HUSSAIN

DELHI,
March 2, 1925

DEAR MIAN SAHEB,

You were kind enough to ask Maulana Mahomed Ali to let me see your note on Hindu-Muslim question. He therefore sent it to me. I have read and reread it. I am entirely in favour of the Mussalmans in the Punjab and Bengal having representation in accordance with their numbers. But I have been unable to follow the argument in favour of separate electorates. Its working seems to be proving unsatisfactory almost everywhere. And if you have separate electorates for one community you can hardly resist such a claim on behalf of the others and finally by sub-sects. This must mean ruin of nationalism. Have you given a thought to the proposal made by me?

I hope you are better and stronger than when I met you. I wish it was possible for us to meet again and oftener.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

[PS.]

I am in Delhi just now. I leave tomorrow for Sabarmati and thence for Madras.

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

125. LETTER TO ZAFAR ALI KHAN

March 2, 1925

I have your letter. I think you are unnecessarily perturbed. If you will reread my note, you will find it to be harmless. I am dealing with your letter in the columns of *Young India* as the subject matter is of general interest.[1] But assume that I have erred, must we not tolerate one another's opinions, especially when they are honestly held?

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

[1] *Vide* "My Crime", 5-3-1925.

126. LETTER TO SAROJINI NAIDU

March 2, 1925

What is this decision about closing the national schools even? I can understand somewhat the closing of the college. Is it necessary to close the schools also?

With love,

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

127. LETTER TO NAROTTAM LALJI JOSHI

March 2, 1925

I have preserved your letter for many days. If I get time, I shall make public use of it in the *Navajivan* without giving your name. If I do so, read my comments carefully. I hope to try and do it soon. You are very greedy. You wish to know everything all at once. You leave nothing for the future, no room for faith. *Ramanama* is no substitute for one's work or profession; but it is for its purification. While doing anything you can chant the Name. Only one with faith can gain some good from it. If you have no faith in your teacher, you can learn nothing from him. They will keep you in the Ashram even for a short period if there is room available. You may write to the manager if you feel like going there. You can do a lot of work in the village, if you can be at peace there and do manual labour.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

[From Gujarati]

From the manuscript of Mahadev Desai's Diary. Courtesy: Narayan Desai

128. STATEMENT ON ADJOURNMENT OF ALL-PARTY CONFERENCE SUB-COMMITTEE

DELHI,
March 2, 1925

Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Motilal Nehru have issued the following statement explaining the reasons which led to the adjournment of the Sub-committee of the All-Party Conference over the Hindu-Muslim question:

It was decided at the meeting[1] of the Sub-committee, appointed by the committee of the All-Party Conference, to adjourn the proceedings *sine die* with the provision that the meeting be called on a requisition from a majority of the members of the Sub-committee. We were also required and authorized by the meeting to give a resume of the position as it stands today. The meeting was attended by very few members—14 out of 53. They were Maulana Mahomed Ali, Maulana Shaukat Ali, Swami Shraddhanand, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. S. Datta, Mr. Ahmed Ali, M.L.A., Raja Ahmad Ali Khan of Salempur, Nawab Sir Sahibzada Abdul Quiyum, Mr. Mohamed Yakub, Mr. N. M. Joshi, Mr. N. C. Kelkar, besides ourselves. Mr. Jinnah came in for a few minutes from another meeting (Independent Party's meeting) he was attending at that time.

Lala Lajpat Rai had asked for a postponement by reason of the inability of Messrs Jayakar, Srinivasa Iyengar[2] and Jairamdas to attend. We were unable to postpone the meeting on our own responsibility. We, therefore, informed Lala Lajpat Rai that the question of postponement be placed before the meeting. This was consequently done. But apart from the absence of Lala Lajpat Rai and of the gentlemen named by him the attendance was otherwise also too meagre for coming to any decision. In our opinion there was moreover no material for coming to any definite conclusions. Nor is there likelihood of any being reached in the near future. We, therefore, see no hope of being able to convene a general meeting of the Conference within the prescribed period except upon a requisition referred to by us. The

[1] Held on March 1. Gandhiji was the President of the Sub-committee and Motilal Nehru, its General Secretary.

[2] Lawyer and Congress leader from Madras; presided over the Gauhati session of the Congress, 1926

failure to reach a decision is likely to disappoint the public. We would, however, advise publicists and others not to despond. That the Sub-committee has not been able to reach any decision is no reason for individuals or groups to relax their effort towards a solution.

There still remains to mention the swaraj scheme framed by the Sub-committee under Dr. Besant. Dissenting notes are being received by us from the members of that committee. In view, however, of the meagre attendance and the failure to reach a decision on the Hindu-Muslim problem the scheme could not be considered by the meeting.

The Hindustan Times, 4-3-1925

129. *LETTER TO MESSRS DABHOLKER & JESHTARAM*[1]

SABARMATI,[2]
March 3, 1925

GENTLEMEN,

I have your letter of . . . enclosing copy of your letter of . . . I have not yet received the letter which has probably gone after me to Delhi.

As the case is before the court in an advanced state and as Mr. Godrej has his own solicitors, I do not wish to say anything about the terms of reference. I shall be glad to serve as arbitrator with anyone your client and Mr. Godrej may nominate. Only my capacity for work in that direction is limited and my co-arbitrator will kindly have to suit my other appointments. Forwarding your letter to Mr. Godrej for such action as he may choose to take.

Yours sincerely,

From a draft in Gandhiji's hand: S.N. 10527 R

[1] This letter was drafted on the reverse of a letter dated March 2, 1925, from Messrs Dabholker & Jeshtaram (a firm of solicitors) to Gandhiji. The source has two blank spaces in the first paragraph.

[2] In "Letter to Fazl-i-Hussain", 2-3-1925, however, Gandhiji writes from Delhi in postscript: "I leave tomorrow for Sabarmati".

130. TELEGRAM TO C. RAJAGOPALACHARI[1]

[*March 4, 1925*]

REACHING MADRAS SATURDAY MORNING. LEAVING FOR VYKOM SAME DATE. DO ACCOMPANY.

From a photostat: S.N. 10633

131. NOTES-I

Hindu-Muslim Problem

The reader will see from the statement published in the Press that the Sub-committee of the All-Party Conference has not been able to come to any decision on the problem of problems. But perhaps it was as well that it did not. The atmosphere for a reasonable solution is lacking. Each distrusts the other. In such circumstances there can be no common ground of action. Each necessarily wants to surrender as little as possible. Nor does one notice a real anxiety on the part of any of the parties for a solution. There is, however, no cause for despair. The present failure may be a stepping-stone to success, if those who can trust and who have no fear of one another will be true to their faith and try to work at a solution. Any solution to be national must disregard the Government, i.e., must have inherent working power and must not depend for its proper working upon the goodwill of the Government.

Helplessness

I have a long telegram describing a daring dacoity attempted in Sukkur at 10 p.m. on the 22nd near the Police Station and in the heart of the town. The telegram adds that the bankers are feeling unsafe and that the dacoits are still uncaught. The object of the telegram no doubt is to excite public sympathy and criticism of a Government the most expensive in the world and yet failing to afford simple protection to life and property. That sympathy the citizens of Sukkur have. Criticism of the Government they

[1] This was in reply to the telegram from C. Rajagopalachari to Devdas Gandhi dated March 4, 1925, which read: "Try accompany Bapu. Write immediately date reaching Madras."

may also have by the cartload. But the more relevant question is what the bankers were doing when the dacoits came. From the telegram it would appear that they more or less successfully attempted self-defence. Those who would keep the possessions cannot have too much power of self-defence. When the helpless cry of robbery comes under my notice, I think more of the weakness of the robbed than of the incapacity of the Government to protect. Law allows the right of self-defence. Human dignity demands the courage to defend oneself. It would be a training in swaraj if the people everywhere instead of ooking to the authority to defend their lives, property and honour would learn to rely upon themselves for self-defence.

A Cry from Sylhet

Here is a pathetic appeal from Sylhet in support of the invitation to visit that District:

> Although our present may not justify us in giving you trouble, we have a past which may not fail to draw your sympathy. Ours is a peculiar position. Politically we are under the administration of the Government of Assam, but we have a close inseparable affinity with Bengal in all matters, linguistic, social, religious and political. This District Congress Committee is within the jurisdiction of the Bengal Provincial Congress Committee.
>
> During the palmy days of non-co-operation this province of Assam including our district was perhaps a victim of bureaucratic wrath next only to the Punjab.
>
> Tea-garden-labour exodus, the incidents of tearing Koran at Maijbhag and lastly the tragedy of Kanaighat had introduced this district to the rest of India.
>
> The "Law and Order" exacted a punitive tax of two lacs more or less from this district containing about 26 lacs of souls.
>
> Nearly 200 national workers were imprisoned.
>
> This ruthless repression dealt a fatal blow to the Congress activities. Many went to their respective callings and hence there is a miserable fall in our ranks.
>
> Out of ten national schools we have only one dragging its weary life. About 20,000 handlooms are at work, but, alas, with the exception of a very few, almost all work in foreign yarn. Sufficient quantity of cotton is being exported by the foreign capitalist year by year from our hills.

The past record of Sylhet is undoubtedly brilliant. But no nation can live merely upon its past. A glorious past may be, ought to be, an inspiration for the present. But the future can

only be determined by the present conduct. It is, therefore, necessary for the people in the Sylhet District to bestir themselves and make the constructive programme a success so far as their part of the country is concerned. It is a sad reflection that all over the country the imprisonment left the people paralysed. If we had understood the secret of suffering, they should have invigorated us instead of enervating us as they did in general. It ought not to be beyond the ability of the people of Sylhet to intercept some of the cotton that leaves their district nor to persuade the weavers to weave hand-spun yarn and to supply them with such yarn spun in their own district. Then and not till then will they be entitled to ask me to visit them.

The Bar Sinister

General Smuts[1] has at last spoken out on the proposed extension of the Colour Bar in South African Legislation. The reader will remember the cablegram received sometime ago that the Union Government was seeking to put the ban on Asiatics being employed in the mines. Speaking on and against that legislation General Smuts is reported to have said:

> In opposing the Colour Bar Bill in the Union Assembly, General Smuts declared that the Bill sought to give the Government power by regulation to apportion work in mines and works between whites on the one hand, and Natives and Asiatics on the other, which he thought was a very serious matter. He felt that the Bill was not honest dealing and it was his deliberate opinion that there was only one guarantee of the security of white civilization, namely, honest justice between man and man in this country. ("Hear, hear!") Turning to the Bill, as it affected Asiatics, he said that in the days of his negotiation with Mr. Gandhi the position which the latter took up, and which had been taken up at subsequent conferences in London, was an appeal not to dishonour Indians. "We recognize", said Mr. Gandhi, "there is a difference between you and us and that distinctions must be made, but don't cast a stigma on us in the laws of your country," but in this Bill they were doing the very thing they were asked to avoid. They were gathering on their heads the hatred of the whole of Asia from one side to the other. In conclusion, he suggested that the matter should be seriously considered, whether they should not discharge the order for the second reading of the Bill, and see whether some way out of the difficulty could not be found.

[1] J. C. Smuts (1870-1950); South African general and statesman, late Prime Minister

General Smuts has correctly given the substance of my conversation with him. My point was that whilst administrative difference there was bound to be so long as human nature remained what it was and so long as there was a conflict between European culture and the Indian, a legal recognition of the difference in the shape of the introduction of the Bar sinister in the laws of the country was an intolerable burden. The settlement of 1914 chiefly consisted in the vindication of the Indian position. With General Smuts' opposition we may hope that the Bill will now be dropped. But let us not deceive ourselves. The Natal Disfranchising Bill recently passed is an extension of the "Bar Sinister". General Smuts' opposition therefore means only a protest against the bar being introduced even in the matter of employment, not against the bar altogether. However I tender my congratulations to General Smuts on his plain speech at the risk of still further weakening his political position in his country. We may not be satisfied till the South African statute-book is purged of all legal inequality as between whites and Asiatics or better still as between white and coloured people.

Young India, 5-3-1925

132. GOD AND CONGRESS

A friend writes:

There is one matter on which I have been longing to approach you for an explanation. It is about the term "God". As a national worker I would not have anything to say against such a passage as this occurring in a recent number of *Young India*: "I present it (*Ramanama*) to the reader whose vision is not blurred and whose faith is not damped by overmuch learning. Learning takes us through many stages in life, but it fails us utterly in the hour of danger and temptation. Then faith alone saves" (*Young India*, 22-1-'25, p. 27).[1] For it is a confession of your individual faith; and I know also that you have not failed on occasions to put in a word of praise about conscientious atheists where it was deserved. As witness the following sentences in your *Niti Dharma*: "We come across many wicked men, priding themselves on their religiosity, while doing the most immoral deeds. On the other hand, there are also men like the late Mr. Bradlaugh[2] who, while being extremely virtuous and moral, take pride in calling themselves atheists." As for the faith in

[1] *Vide* "Notes", 22-1-1925, sub-title, "Ramanama".
[2] 1833-91; English free thinker and politician; *vide* Vol. VI, p. 312.

Ramanama which "alone saves us in the hour of danger and temptation", I may mention the martyrdom of the rationalist Francisco Ferrer in 1909 at Barcelona in Spain at the hands of men who believed in Jesus' name, their *Ramanama*. I shall not dwell on the Holy Wars, the burnings and mutilations of heretics, and the torture and slaughter of animals and sometimes of men in sacrifice—all of which have been carried out "for the greater glory of God and in His name". This is by the bye [*sic.*].

As a national worker, however, I feel, I must draw your attention to the objection which Mr.—raised (on behalf of a rationalist friend of his) to your saying that only "godfearing" men can become true non-co-operators, and remind you of the assurance you then gave to all to the effect that the programme of national work does not require a man to declare his religious faith. (*Vide Young India*, May 4, 1921 pp. 138-9)[1] That objection applies with greater force now than it did at that time, because "God" has now a place on pledges and vows such as that administered to Congress volunteers, which begins "with God as witness, I . . ." Now you must be knowing that the Buddhists (like the Burmese . . . now an "Indian" people, and your friend Prof. Dharmanand Kosambi) and the Jains, as well as many Indians who do not belong to these ancient recognized sects are agnostic in faith. Is it possible to these, if they wish, to enrol as Congress Volunteers conscientiously and with full understanding of a pledge which begins in the name of an Entity they ignore? If not, is it proper to exclude from Congress service any such merely because of their religious faith? May I suggest that a conscience clause be added to accommodate all such cases, allowing of solemn affirmation in place of the oath in the name of God (to which even some believers in a personal God object, as the Quakers), or else a substitution of "Conscience" in place of "God" by all conscientious objectors to the use of the latter, or—best of all—that a solemn affirmation without reference to God and with or without "Conscience" be required of *all* comers without distinction? I approach you as you are the author of that pledge and now the President of the Congress. I did so once before, but I am afraid, not in time for you to be able to attend to it before your historic arrest at Sabarmati in 1922.

So far as the conscientious objection is concerned the mention of God may be removed if required from the Congress pledge of which I am proud to think I was the author. Had such an objection been raised at the time, I would have yielded at once. I was unprepared for the objection in a place like India. Though

[1] *Vide* Vol. XX, p. 58.

there is officially the Charvak[1] school, I do not know that it has any votaries. I deny that Buddhists and Jains are atheists or agnostics. The latter they cannot be. Those who believe in the soul as apart from and capable of life independent of and after the dissolution of the body cannot be called atheists. We may all have different definitions for "God". If we could all give our own definitions of God there would be as many definitions as there are men and women. But behind all that variety of definitions there would be also a certain sameness which would be unmistakable. For the root is one. God is that indefinable something which we all feel but which we do not know. Charles Bradlaugh described himself as an atheist no doubt but many a Christian declined to regard him as such. He recognized in Bradlaugh a greater kinship with himself than many a lip Christian. I had the privilege of attending the funeral of that good friend of India. I noticed several clergymen at the function. There were certainly several Mussalmans and many Hindus in the procession. They all believed in God. Bradlaugh's denial of God was a denial of Him as He was known to Bradlaugh to have been described. His was an eloquent and indignant protest against the then current theology and the terrible contrast between precept and practice. To me God is truth and love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. God is the source of Light and Life and yet He is above and beyond all these. God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist. For in His boundless love God permits the atheist to live. He is the searcher of hearts. He transcends speech and reason. He knows us and our hearts better than we do ourselves. He does not take us at our word for He knows that we often do not mean it, some knowingly and others unknowingly. He is a personal God to those who need His personal presence. He is embodied to those who need His touch. He is the purest essence. He simply Is to those who have faith. He is all things to all men. He is in us and yet above and beyond us. One may banish the word "God" from the Congress but one has no power to banish the Thing Itself. What is a solemn affirmation if it is not the same thing as in the name of God. And surely conscience is but a poor and laborious paraphrase of the simple combination of three letters called God. He cannot cease to be because hideous immoralities or inhuman brutalities are committed in His name. He is long suffering. He is patient but He is also terrible. He is the most exacting personage in the world and the world to come. He metes

[1] Ancient materialist philosopher whose followers are called by his name

out the same measure to us that we mete out to our neighbours—men and brutes. With Him ignorance is no excuse. And withal He is ever forgiving for He always gives us the chance to repent. He is the greatest democrat the world knows, for He leaves us "unfettered" to make our own choice between evil and good. He is the greatest tyrant ever known, for He often dashes the cup from our lips and, under cover of free will, leaves us a margin so wholly inadequate as to provide only mirth for Himself at our expense. Therefore it is that Hinduism calls it all His sport—*lila*, or calls it all an illusion—*maya*. We are *not*, He alone *Is*. And if we will be, we must eternally sing His praise and do His will. Let us dance to the tune of His *bansi*—lute, and all would be well.[1]

Since reference has been made to a booklet[2] of mine on ethics and religion, I must draw the attention of the reader to the fact that what the correspondent refers to is a translation of the original which is in Gujarati. But the Gujarati itself as the preface makes it clear is not an original effort but an adaption from an American publication called *Ethical Religion* by Mr. Salter. The translation came under my notice in Yeravda Jail and I regretted to notice the absence of any mention of the source from which I had borrowed. The translator himself I understand did not rely upon the original Gujarati but a Hindi translation. The English rendering therefore is a round-about thing. I owe this explanation to the author of the original book and I am glad that the mention of the work by my correspondent has reminded me of my obligation.

Young India, 5-3-1925

133. MY CRIME

I gladly print the following from Maulana Zafar Ali Khan written by him in his capacity as President of the Punjab Khilafat Committee:

> I have read with feelings of mingled amazement and pain your pronouncement, in *Young India* of the 26th instant, on stoning incidents in Kabul. You say that "this particular form of penalty cannot be defended on the mere ground of its mention in the Koran".[3] You,

[1] What follows has been appended to the article under Gandhiji's signature.

[2] *Vide* Vol. VI, p. 312.

[3] *Vide* "Notes", 26-2-1925, sub-title, "Stoning to Death".

moreover, declare that "every formula of every religion has in this age of reason to submit to the acid test of reason and universal justice if it is to ask for universal assent". Finally you maintain that error can claim no exemption even if it can be supported by the scriptures of the world.

I have always paid unstinted homage to your greatness and have all along looked upon you as one of the few men who are making modern history; but I would be failing in my duty as a Mussalman if I refrained from pointing out to you that by challenging the right of the Koran to regulate the life of its followers in its own way you have shaken the belief of millions of your Muslim admirers in your capacity to lead them.

You are at perfect liberty to express your opinion one way or the other as to whether renegades can be stoned to death under the law of Islam. But to hold that even if the Koran supported such form of penalty, it should be condemned outright as an error, is a form of reasoning which cannot appeal to the Mussalmans.

Error is after all a relative term and Mussalmans have their own way of interpreting it. To them the Koran is an unalterable law which transcends the ever changing policies and expediencies of puny humanity. Would to God that to your multifarious activities as leader of India you had not added the rather delicate task of adversely criticizing the teaching of the Holy Koran.

The Maulana has put an interpretation upon my note which it does not bear. I have not adversely (or otherwise) criticized the teachings of the Holy Koran. But I have criticised the teachers, that is, the interpreters, in anticipation of their defending the penalty of stoning to death. I claim to understand enough of the Koran and the history of Islam to know that a multitude of interpreters have interpreted the Koran to suit their preconceived notions. My purpose was to issue a warning against the acceptance of such interpretations. But I would like to say that even the teachings themselves of the Koran cannot be exempt from criticism. Every true scripture only gains by criticism. After all we have no other guide but our reason to tell us what may be regarded as revealed and what may not be. The early Mussalmans accepted Islam not because they knew it to be revealed but because it appealed to their virgin reason. I fully endorse the Maulana's statement that error is a relative term. But we know as a matter of fact that some things are universally accepted as errors. Death by torture is, I expect, such an error. In making the three statements the Maulana has quoted, I have simply mentioned three canons of interpretations which I think are incap-

able of challenge. Anyway, I abide by them. And if I am at perfect liberty to express my opinion "as to whether renegades can be stoned to death under the law of Islam" why may I not express an opinion as to whether penalty of stoning to death can be imposed at all under the law of Islam? The Maulana has betrayed intolerance of criticism by a non-Muslim of anything relating to Islam. I suggest to him that intolerance of criticism even of what one may prize as dear as life itself is not conducive to the growth of public corporate life. Surely Islam has nothing to fear from criticism even if it be unreasonable. I therefore suggest to the Maulana the advisability in the light of my criticism of applying himself to an elucidation of the tremendous issues involved in the incidents reported from Kabul.

Young India, 5-3-1925

134. NOTES-II

An Oasis in the Desert

In the midst of complaints against Bombay in the matter of khaddar, one is glad to find that a group of ladies are doing silent and effective work in spreading khaddar. A letter before me says:

> This month we are selling over Rs. 2,000 worth of khaddar vests for the work guild and schools. Moreover we have sent some to Bhavnagar. Add to this the usual money sales. A new class is being opened in the Seva Sadan[1] on the condition that only those children are to be admitted to it who are prepared to do a certain amount of spinning every day. When they have mastered the art, they are to contribute 2,000 yards per month. This is impressing the existing classes. The girls are to commence hand-spinning in some of them.

Another friend properly remarks that it is not the people that are apathetic. It is the workers, the leaders. They are doing nothing to spread the gospel. The people have not yet developed that liking for khaddar as to make them go out of their way to procure khaddar, but if it is brought to their doors, they would gladly take it. The harvest is indeed such but the labourers are few. Why will not every worker make it a point to sell a given quantity of khaddar per month? I know that we have made sufficient progress in the manufacture of khaddar to be able to supply the most fastidious tastes. I was shown the other

[1] Sarasvat Hall; *vide* "A Correction", 26-3-1925.

day a rich bride's trousers. It was all made of khaddar and silver and gold embroidery. There was nothing wanting from a rich man's point of view. And the khaddar saris were as fine as one could possibly desire. There was the inevitable richly-coloured shawl too made of khaddar which the bride has to wear on her being given to the bridegroom. Let no one therefore pretend that he or she does not use khaddar because it is not fine enough or coloured according to one's tastes. Will the workers all over India please note and copy the example of the silent sisters whose efforts I have brought to their notice?

FARIDPUR CONFERENCE

I have telegrams from Faridpur urging me to attend the Bengal Provincial Conference. I am extremely sorry for my inability to attend it, much as I would love to do so. I had warned[1] the Faridpur friends not to rely upon my attendance. I had told them that my movements were uncertain. Mine is not an enviable position. I have calls from Bihar, Wardha, Orissa, Andhra and several other places. I would like to visit all of them. But since I cannot visit all at the same time, I must judge where I can be of the greatest service at a particular moment. I feel that my place just now is among the valiant band of satyagrahis at Vykom. It is a promise long overdue. They are endeavouring to enforce the doctrine of satyagraha in every minute detail. They are few in number. They are fighting against heavy odds. Till now I have interfered with their seeking monetary and other help from outside. It is due to them that I should as a professing expert go to them and guide them and hearten them for all that lies in front of them. The friends from the other provinces will not grudge me or them this privilege of long-deferred communion.

What is more, whereas I fancy I can be of some assistance to these satyagrahis, I feel sure that I can be of no use in the other provinces except to be on show there. My prescription for them is incredibly simple. Settle your local differences whether they are between Hindus and Mussalmans or other or whether they are between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. Spin as much as you can, wear khaddar on all occasions, enrol as many self-spinning members as you can for the Congress. And add to these those who will not spin themselves but will gladly furnish 2,000 yards of yarn per month, hand-spun for them by others. Help the suppressed classes in your district or province in every way you

[1] *Vide* "Telegram to Secretary, Congress Committee, Calcutta", 23-2-1925.

can, rid your place of the drink and the opium evil, and then invite me for further effort. If we want an era of hope dawning upon us next year, during this year of grace we shall devote all our energy to the national constructive programme undeterred by anything that the Government may or may not do, the Bengal Ordinance notwithstanding. If we want to see the Ordinance removed, we must generate enough strength for the purpose. The only way I know of so doing is to work the constructive programme with all our might.

A Case for Reconsideration

Mr. A. V. Thakkar, that friend of the suppressed classes, has sent me a copy of the Report of the Committee appointed by the Bombay Corporation to inquire into the ejection from municipal chawls of certain members belonging to the suppressed classes. These poor men and women have been driven out on the grounds that they are not in municipal service, that some of them can afford to pay more and that some others are undesirable persons against whom prosecutions have been proved. On behalf of the evicted people it has been contended that they are near relatives of the employees, that they have been living in municipal chawls for years and that the evictions have been brought about at the instance of corrupt municipal servants who could not get bribes from the evicted persons. In the Municipal Commissioner's report it is stated that

> some years ago after visiting the chawls and making enquiries I was satisfied that the evidence and statements made (about corruption) were such that no impartial person could accept them.

I cannot recall any such statement having been made by me. But the question of bribery is irrelevant. Even if every Municipal official would be proved to be above corruption, the eviction of the people other than employees is bad in principle *so far as the suppressed classes are concerned.* Theirs is a special case. They have nowhere to go to. They do not cluster together in municipal chawls for the sake of finding cheap habitation. They live there because they can procure no other for love or money. I hold that it is the duty of the Corporation not only to let the relatives of the suppressed class employees remain with them but it is also to provide enough and decent additional accommodation for these classes. The Corporation will be entitled to charge a reasonable rent for such accommodation. I know instances of very respectable members belonging to the suppressed classes having been unable to procure lodgings at any rent whatsoever. The owners will not

let their houses to these classes. The objection of the Committee or the Municipal Commissioner to persons other than employees occupying municipal chawls would be valid, if it were raised in connection with any other class. I hope therefore that the case will be reopened and provision made for every one of the evicted men and women of the suppressed class.

Young India, 5-3-1925

135. TELEGRAM TO PRESIDENT, MADRAS CORPORATION

March 5, 1925

PRESIDENT
MADRAS CORPORATION
MADRAS

THANKS. GLADLY ACCEPT ADDRESS SATURDAY AT TIME CONVENIENT CORPORATION.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

136. TELEGRAM TO DR. VARADARAJULU NAIDU

March 5, 1925

DR. VARADARAJULU NAIDU
3 BROADWAY
MADRAS

HAVE WIRED CORPORATION AGREEING ACCEPT ADDRESS SATURDAY IMPOSSIBLE STAY TWO DAYS MADRAS VIEW SILENCE DAY BEING IMMEDIATELY AFTER.

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

137. TELEGRAM TO S. SRINIVASA IYENGER

March 5, 1925

S. SRINIVASA IYENGER
MYLAPORE
MADRAS

HAVE WIRED CORPORATION AGREEING ACCEPT ADDRESS SATURDAY.

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

138. TELEGRAM TO ANNE MARIE PETERSEN

March 5, 1925

MISS PETERSEN[1]
PORTO NOVO

REACHING MADRAS SATURDAY MORNING "EN ROUTE" VYKOM.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

139. LETTER TO AMRITLAL KHETSI

BOMBAY,
Phagan Sud 10 [*March 5, 1925*][2]

BHAISHRI AMRITLAL,

I am sorry to learn that Chi. Rami is ill. While I am at Vykom keep me informed about her. Tell her to write to me as soon as she gets well.

Blessings from
MOHANDAS

BHAISHRI AMRITLAL KHETSI
NEAR KANYASHALA
DHRANGADHRA

From a copy of the Gujarati: C.W. 677. Courtesy: Navajivan Trust

[1] A member of the staff of the Danish Missionary Society in South India

[2] Gandhiji was in Bombay on March 5, 1925, *en route* to Vykom.

140. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Phagan Sud 10 [March 5, 1925][1]

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter from Ranchi. A folding charkha has been sent to your Calcutta address from the Ashram and another, of a new pattern, from Delhi. Both were despatched before your letter was received; so they have gone to Calcutta.

I am sorry to learn about your wife's indifferent health. It is difficult to give you any advice without knowing the full details of her illness. However, as a general rule during illness the patient should have as little food as possible, and this too mainly milk and fruit. It is our common practice to close one's bedroom during illness whereas there is all the greater need then for fresh air. But then all the things I suggest are beside the point; whatever your doctor or *vaid*[2] says should be taken as right.

I am leaving for Vykom today. Probably I shall have to be in Madras Presidency till the end of this month. I hope to reach the Ashram by the 26th or 27th March.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6118. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

141. INTERVIEW TO PRESS ON HINDU-MUSLIM PROBLEM

BOMBAY,
March 5, 1925

My views remain the same as hitherto. Unity is inevitable. It will take longer than I had expected. The estrangement is undoubtedly growing. Let us hope that even in the midst of the storm, some of us will remain calm. I am out for conquest. I as a Hindu will not therefore quarrel with the Mussalmans, neither will I yield to threats, such as I see are reported to have been uttered at Peshawar. I am in correspondence[3] both with Maulana

[1] Gandhiji left Bombay for Madras on March 5, 1925.
[2] A physician practising the Ayurvedic system of medicine
[3] *Vide* "My Crime", 5-3-1925.

Zafar Ali Khan and Dr. Kitchlew[1]. I hope that they are incorrectly reported. But I must refuse to lose my head even if they have said all that has been reported of them. I do not believe in the efficacy of retaliation. I would urge the Hindus not to be angry over such incidents. But I see that there is no settlement to be had in the near future. No lasting settlement can be had by higgling. I cannot be interested in a fight for sharing power with the bureaucracy. Such fight can only strengthen British dominance. I would prefer anarchy to that dominance. As equals I would value co-operation of the British, but I would prefer anarchy to their dominance. For I know that we can never become one nation through that dominance. I can see the chance of reconciliation between Hindus and Mussalmans after a free and hearty fight, but I see none with British arms restraining us. We must learn to restrain ourselves. My motto, therefore, is "Unite now, today, if you can; fight if you must. But in every case avoid British intervention". I know that the temptation is great. But, great or small, I must avoid it at all cost. I can see swaraj rising out of the Thermopylae being enacted in every street or village of India, but I can see no swaraj out of the armed neutrality between the two communities. There is as much need for a change of heart among the Hindus and Mussalmans, as there is among the British, before a proper settlement is arrived at.

"But who will follow your advice?" asked the interviewer. The Mahatma replied:

I will. Is it not enough? Must I surrender my belief because no one will follow it?

"Still, that is no answer to my question," said the interviewer. The Mahatma answered:

Your complaint is just. I cannot however take you any further. I know that I am at a discount just now. People will rush to the Government and in such circumstances if I were the Government, probably I would do exactly as the British are doing, i.e., try to divide both and rule. What can one do with those who want to be ruled? The Hindu-Muslim problem is therefore just now an insoluble puzzle. I propose to keep out of it, holding myself available whenever wanted. I believe in God, not as a theory but a fact, more real than that of life itself. I must therefore wait upon Him. In the hour of my need He will guide my steps on this question as He has done hitherto. Meanwhile,

[1] 1887-1963; Barrister and Congress leader of the Punjab

in the spinning-wheel and untouchability, I have more than enough to occupy my time and that of those who think like me.

"But will you not make some concrete suggestion for those who will (not?) follow your advice?" was the last question.

I must think about them. I do not want to add to the complications by adding a new formula to the many that are current among us, unless I see a chance of its proper working.

The Hindu, 6-3-1925

142. LETTER TO JANAKDHARI PRASAD

ON THE TRAIN,
March 6, 1925

DEAR JANAKDHARI BABU[1],

Your letter has been travelling with me all this time. I am now writing this in the train that is taking me to Madras. I had no intention of being inattentive to anybody at Belgaum. But what was I to do? I had not a moment for personal chats. I therefore hardened my heart.

You are morose. There is no occasion for it. Let us do the day's work to the best of our ability and smile. All work faithfully done has the same value in the book of life. Why then should we worry?

You have not asked any definite questions. But if you have any, pray do not hesitate to ask them. Be assured that you are the same to me that you were before. I treasure the memory of the faithful co-workers of Champaran. I shall never have and never had a more faithful band to work with. If I had such a band throughout India, swaraj will not be long in coming to India.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: G.N. 48

[1] One of Gandhiji's co-workers in the Champaran campaign of 1917

143. TELEGRAM TO "NAVAJIVAN"

MADRAS,
March 6, 1925

"NAVAJIVAN"
AHMEDABAD

POSTED SIXTEEN COLUMNS. ANDREWS ARTICLES MUST GO IN. PICK AND CHOOSE FROM MINE.

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

144. TELEGRAM TO PRINCIPAL, UNION COLLEGE, ALWAYE

MADRAS,
March 6, 1925

PRINCIPAL
UNION COLLEGE
ALWAYE

PREFER FIX PROGRAMME AFTER VYKOM INSTEAD BREAKING JOURNEY.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

145. LETTER TO CHHAGANLAL GANDHI

ON THE WAY,
Phagan Sud 11 [*March 6, 1925*][1]

CHI. CHHAGANLAL[2],

If the man from Ankleshwar comes, give him his ring and ask him to write to me if he wants to say anything. Do not allow him to stay at all in the Ashram. The fellow is obviously mad.

Blessings from
BAPU

[1] In 1925, *Phagan Sud* 11 fell on March 6. The postmark, however, bears the date March 7, 1925.

[2] Gandhiji's nephew and associate

[PS.]

You must have sent the Rs. 5,000 of Wadhwan. Do the needful about the cheques for Rs. 4,000.

CHI. CHHAGANLAL
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
SABARMATI

From a photostat of the Gujarati: S.N. 10245

146. INTERVIEW TO "SWADESAMITRAN"[1]

MADRAS,
March 7, 1925

Our representative had an interview with Mahatmaji at about 1.30 p.m. at the residence of Shri Srinivasa Iyengar. . . . When our representative arrived there, a few college girls were already there to have the *darshan*[2] of Mahatmaji.

Mahatmaji asked the girls:

Do you spin on the charkha?

One of the girls replied that as they were at college, they could not find time for spinning. Mahatmaji asked them a few questions about their college, curricula, etc, and asked,

"Do you like Tamil language more, or English?"

One of them replied that they have more liking for Tamil which was their mother tongue. At the end, when the girls took leave of Gandhiji, he advised them to take to spinning on charkha. The girls promised to do so.

Thereafter, our representative had the following conversation with Gandhiji:

QUESTION: When I read in papers about what you told a Press correspondent at Bombay regarding the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity, I felt that the atmosphere was such as to cause difference. I would therefore like to know from you directly your assessment of the present situation.

There is an increasing lack of unity between the two fraternal groups. Mutual suspicion has grown.

What would be your immediate solution to this problem?

Mutual mistrust should be given up to strengthen the bonds of unity; the people should repose faith in their leaders.

[1] A Tamil Daily

[2] Sight of a person, place or thing considered holy

In connection with the Viceroy's visit to England, the British Press have started a propaganda campaign against India and against Indian interests and advancement. In this context, a few persons have suggested that we should also do counter-propaganda in England for making the truth known and for explaining the viewpoints of the Indian people. I would like to know your opinion in the matter.

It is impossible for us to do propaganda through the British Press. The British Press is bent upon furthering Imperial aims. However much we give them facts about the actual position in India, they would not publish them. At one time, factual material for publication as an advertisement was sent to a British paper by a person along with the charges for publication. But the paper returned the money saying that it could not publish it.

Can't we propagate our views among the general public in England?

The British people are not such as to believe only the views expressed by our speakers. The Englishmen by nature are made to realize the bad situation in a country only by two indications, that is, by the eruption of revolution or the launching of the mass movement of non-co-operation with government in that country. Once upon a time when Babu Surendra Nath Banerjea[1] went to England and ably represented the degenerated state of affairs in India, it is said that an English gentleman posed this question: "If what you say is true, why haven't your countrymen risen in revolt?" The same mentality still persists.

It is said that the majority report of the Reforms Enquiry Committee[2] is retrograde. Is it not necessary to start a country-wide agitation against Government accepting the findings of the committee?

As far as I am concerned, I try my level best to read the minds of the common people whether it be the retrograde findings of the Muddiman Committee, Government's repressive measures,

[1] 1848-1925; Member of the Congress deputation to England in 1890; President of the Indian National Congress in 1895 and 1902; member, Viceroy's Executive Council

[2] The official committee appointed under the chairmanship of Sir Alexander Muddiman to examine and report on the improved working of the Government of India Act. In its report published in March 1925, the majority comprising Muddiman and three others took the position that by their terms of reference they could not recommend remedies inconsistent with the purpose of the Act, but they praised the successful working of the system. On the other hand, the minority found that the dyarchical constitution had failed and was incapable of yielding better results in the future; *vide India in 1925-26*, pp. 57-8.

or its frightful governance, I do not think that any of these factors would be able to arouse feelings among our countrymen at present. To the extent I can, I only see a sense of despair overwhelming the people all over our country.

What then is your suggestion to rid the people of their despair and infuse spirit in them?

There is no better device to inculcate the right spirit in the people than the universal adoption of hand-spinning on charkha. The primary demand of the masses, the poor, is food. It is charkha alone that is capable of giving food to all of them, like a grand benefactor.

You might have come across the recent speeches made by General Smuts. Is it advisable for South African Indians to join hands with him and his partymen in the agitation for securing the rights mentioned in his speeches?

If General Smuts really intends to put in practice all that he uttered in his [recent] speeches, it is enough if united efforts are made to achieve the rights enumerated by him. At present he is in the opposition. Indians [in South Africa] may join him in his efforts to secure the said rights. But one has to be cautious as the possibility of his going back on his words when he is back in power should also be borne in mind.

Gandhiji said it was not possible for him to say then how long he would stop at Vykom, and that he would inform all concerned prior to his return to Madras.

[From Tamil]
Swadesamitran, 7-3-1925

147. INTERVIEW TO FREE PRESS OF INDIA

MADRAS,
March 7, 1925

A representative of the *Free Press of India* interviewed the Mahatma in regard to Lord Reading's visit to England.

Do you anticipate any change in Britain's Indian policy consequent on Birkenhead[1]-Reading consultations?

What a big question this for a simple man believing in the spinning-wheel?

[1] Lord Birkenhead (1872-1930); English statesman; Secretary of State for India, 1924-28

Supposing Government takes to a policy of repression in the near future, what will be your message to the country?

I will say: "Khaddar, khaddar, khaddar." That is one thing I emphasize. Remember the removal of untouchability too.

Do you believe that khaddar only is sufficient answer for repression.

Yes, that is so. It is an effective one.

The Bombay Chronicle, 9-3-1925

148. INTERVIEW TO "SWARAJYA"

MADRAS,
March 7, 1925

Questioned by the *Swarajya* representative whether the acceptance of office by the Swarajists would in any way affect the relations between the Congress and the Swaraj Party, Mahatmaji answered with a decisive "No" and added that the Congress had given a *carte blanche* to the Swarajists in regard to their activities in the Councils.

On his attention being drawn to the Viceroy's assent to the Hindu Religious Endowments Act in spite of opposition from the elected Hindu members, Mahatmaji stated that he had not studied that Act or its implications, and added that in case it became absolutely necessary for him to do so he would pay his attention to it and express his opinion in course of time.

Questioned whether it was consistent with the policy of the Congress for the President of the Tamilnad Congress Committee to openly support the Act, Mahatmaji replied that he saw no objection to any Congressman supporting the Act who also accepted the principle of entry into the Councils.

To another question Mahatmaji replied that he would certainly avail himself of the opportunity of his visit to Vykom to see the Maharani Regent if he could.

He also confessed with regret that the prospects of Hindu-Muslim unity in the North which he lately visited were not very bright. He said that on his way to Bombay he had written on the subject to Dr. Kitchlew and other Muslim leaders and he was expecting a reply from them. Mahatmaji expressed his satisfaction at the cordial relationship existing between the two communities in this province.

The only message he could give to the South was:

I ask them to spin, that's all.

The Bombay Chronicle, 12-3-1925

149. SPEECH IN REPLY TO CORPORATION ADDRESS, MADRAS[1]

March 7, 1925

MR. PRESIDENT, MEMBERS OF THE CORPORATION, AND FRIENDS,

As usual, I hope you will excuse me for my inability to speak to you standing. I thank you very sincerely for the beautiful address that you have been pleased to present to me. It is always a matter of embarrassment for me to receive addresses. On several occasions I have described myself as a scavenger, and I should be content if I could die also as a scavenger. I am a lover of municipal work. Fates have decided otherwise. There was a time when I was myself thinking seriously of taking to municipal life. It is a life in which a great deal of plodding is required. I am myself a plodder, and I call myself a scavenger because I believe in sanitation from more than one point of view, that is to say, in outward sanitation, as also inward sanitation.

I am not a stranger to Madras. I have lived off and on several occasions in Madras, sufficiently long to enable me to study and understand the sanitation of your city; and it has always grieved me whenever I have walked through your streets early in the morning to see them disfigured. I used to talk when I used to live with Mr. Natesan[2] about the conditions of the streets of Madras. I do not wish to single out the streets of Madras as if they are more insanitary than the streets of other cities of India. But I cannot help remarking upon the condition of your streets because I think that more than any other city of India, the streets of Madras were at that time disfigured even by grown-up elderly men. It was a sight to which I must confess I was unused before I came to Madras, and often did I feel like taking a broom myself and cleaning up every nook and corner of the streets through which I passed. I still indulge in it as a pastime. Whenever I can get a little bit of cleaning work, I assure you, it gives me a pleasure and you could understand my weakness also for municipal addresses. If I must receive addresses at all, I always feel that the receipt of the municipal address does give me opportunity to drive this one truth home to the citizens of India. I

[1] Dr. Usman, the president, read out the address of welcome on behalf of the Corporation.

[2] G. A. Natesan, editor of *The Indian Review*, Madras

feel that in the matter of outward sanitation we have to learn a great deal from the West. It has been my painful duty often to speak against the Western civilization and the methods of the West. I, therefore, whenever I get an opportunity, never miss the opportunity of saying what we can legitimately and usefully learn from the West; and I think that for the methods of sanitation in the large cities that we have in India we cannot do better than go to the West for the lessons. I wish I could drive the truth home to you that scavenging is an occupation which is a noble occupation although it may not give as much renown and that notoriety which services in other departments of life bring to us. You will not misunderstand me when I make this comparison in favour of municipal service. Service in other walks of life is just as important as municipal service, but I have noticed a tendency in our public life to disregard the value of municipal service.

You have said several things in your address in praise of such humble services which I have been able to render in my capacity as a humanitarian. I am humanitarian first, and I want to remain a humanitarian up to the very last. I notice, however, one singular omission from your address, and that is in connection with khaddar. I would like to point out to you that among my humble services in the cause of humanity I place khaddar almost in the forefront. Unity among the different races and the different communities belonging to different religions of India is indispensable to the birth of national life. Remove the curse of untouchability, which is as necessary as the removal of phthisis to an individual. It is eating into the vitals of Hinduism, but the removal of the degrading poverty of the masses is dependent upon khaddar and it is for that reason that I say to every Indian, to every Englishman in India, every foreigner who comes to India to visit me when they ask me what is it that I would desire for a foreigner to do. I tell him: "Study the conditions of my country and find out whether you have anything better than simple spinning-wheel, and if you find, after a careful study of the conditions of India, that there is nothing better, speak a word on behalf of the spinning-wheel." I wish that I could isolate the spinning-wheel from several other things, from the politics of the country. But you are aware I have said on more than one occasion that all these departments of life are interwoven and intermixed, that it is impossible to isolate them from the other departments of life. But I do know that, apart from the political value of the spinning-wheel, and to produce khaddar, if we are to remove the economic distress under which

this land is labouring, if we are to serve the dumb millions of India, we cannot do without khaddar, we cannot do without the spinning-wheel. I therefore humbly commend it to the attention of the Municipal Councillors. I ask you to give it a place in your schools and I ask you whether you are Englishmen or Indians, whether you are Mussalmans or Hindus, whether you belong to one political school or other in the country, to give place to the spinning-wheel and khaddar in your homes.

I assure you after a little bit of experience of spinning-wheel and khaddar that what I have said is the truth and nothing but the truth. I thank you very much again for presenting me with this address. I wish the Municipal Corporation of Madras a successful career and in the competition for shining in the matters of municipal life the first place. I thank you once again.

The Hindu, 7-3-1925

150. *SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MADRAS*[1]

March 7, 1925

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I thank you all and the various associations sincerely for the addresses that have been presented to me this afternoon. It is a matter for great pity that even after so many years it is not possible for you to understand Hindustani or Hindi and it is a matter of shame and sorrow for me that I am unable to speak to you either in Tamil or in Telugu. I was looking forward to the pleasure of being able to address the audiences in the southern Presidency in Tamil if I had been allowed to finish my six years in Yeravda. Unfortunately for me and unfortunately for you it was not to be. But I do hope that a time will come, and that soon, when you will insist upon people coming from the north and the western Presidency addressing you in Hindustani. You know, and if you have not, you ought to know, that over Rs. 75,000 have been brought from the other parts of India and spent in the southern Presidency in order to induce it to pick up Hindustani. There are teachers covering this Presidency who are giving lessons in Hindi or Hindustani. After all you should take the trouble of learning them. If you have not yet availed

[1] At Tilak Ghat (Triplicane Beach). The speech was translated into Tamil, sentence by sentence, by S. Satyamurti.

yourselves of the opportunity afforded to you let me hope that you will do so now.

It is but a stage in my journey that I find myself today in Madras. I have come not to pay a visit to Madras but to visit the satyagrahis at Vykom and if, after I have finished my work there, time is left for me I do intend to pass a few days in Madras and renew my acquaintance with you individually. ("Hear, hear!") Meanwhile, I ask you to respond to the request made from the chair that you should pray for the success of the mission that awaits me in Vykom. I am going to Vykom personally to tender my sympathy and support to the devoted band of satyagrahis. I hope that they will allow me to wait upon the orthodox party and try to find out their viewpoint. Satyagraha not being a war of violence but being a war of conversion and of conviction, no opportunity will be lost by me in trying to understand the viewpoint of the orthodox party and placing my own before them. If she will graciously permit me I hope also to wait upon Her Highness the Maharani as also upon the Diwan and the other officials concerned.

For me the question of untouchability is a deeply religious question. It is a matter of penance and purification on the part of those who are not untouchables. It is a matter of essential reform in Hinduism. If you will therefore out of deepest conviction pray for success to my mission I want all these prayers of yours.

I know that having come here you will expect me to say something on the present situation that faces India, but you will not expect me to speak upon what may be termed the political side of the question. I am uninterested in it. Whilst it is an integral part of the Congress organization, I have purposely refrained from interesting myself in it.

I have no aptitude for it, nor faith in it. But that does not by any means mean that others need not or should not have faith in that programme. My life's work is chalked out for me. I know for certain that if we can ensure reform from within, the other will follow as day follows night. I am equally certain that no reform from without can avail without reform from within. Every effort that might be made in the Legislative Councils or in the Legislative Assembly, every effort that might be made on your behalf in London, will be perfectly fruitless. This is not said by way of criticism of those who are taking part in that activity, but this is said in order to emphasize the fact that you and I, the men in the street, have to look after ourselves. This is said in order

to emphasize the fact that if you and I are to help the fruition of that programme, we must work from within. What can your Councils do if Hindus and Mussalmans fly at one another's throats? What can the Councillors do on the Council floor if we, the Hindus, ostracize a fifth of our own kith and kin? What can they do if we will not identify ourselves with the down-trodden, poverty-stricken masses of India by turning the wheel and wearing khaddar? I am told times without number, in season and out of season, that nothing can be done in this great country of ours unless there is some excitement provided for the people. But please remember that swaraj is not a product of excitement or intoxication. Swaraj will be the natural and inevitable result of business-like habits. It will be a natural and inevitable result of co-operation among our own ranks, of exacting discipline and obedience, and of sustained energy and willing, well-meant, calculated sacrifice. It will be the natural and inevitable result of co-operative industry on the part of the whole nation. It will be the natural and inevitable result of an enlightened awakening amongst the masses of India. But half-a-dozen or twenty cities of India alone working together cannot bring swaraj. We who have attained a degree of political consciousness and have begun to love our country for the sake of it, must spread ourselves out amongst the masses and go back to the villages.

Of Hindu-Muslim unity you know what I have said in Bombay. Those of you who know how to spin will understand the simile I am about to give you. Indifferent spinners amongst you know how sometimes when you are unwinding your yarn from the spindle it becomes sometimes a tangle. You know the more you try to undo the tangle the more knotty it becomes, and a wise spinner leaves his tangle aside for the moment when he has lost his temper and approaches it after he has cooled down. So it is with the Hindu-Muslim question. It has become a hopeless tangle at the present moment. I thought I was an expert in solving that tangle as I think I am also an expert in spinning. But for the time being I have put away in my cupboard this Hindu-Muslim tangle. That does not mean that I have despaired of a solution. My mind will eternally work at it till I find out a solution. But I must confess to you today that I cannot present a workable solution that you will accept. In the atmosphere surcharged as it is with mutual distrust I cannot persuade either the Hindus or the Mussalmans to accept my solution. But for you I would like to leave this little single thought that those of you who have to deal with Hindus or Mussalmans as the case

may be, be straightforward, honest and fearless in your dealings with one another. In spite of the horizon which is black before you, do not lose faith, be loving to one another, remembering that the same Divine Spirit inhabits whether it is the Hindu body or Muslim body and try to be charitable, one towards the other.

Of untouchability you know the exact position without my having to say a word. But I am aware, probably you will also agree, that we have, during the last four years, made a tremendous advance in the right direction. It is not enough, I know, for the purpose required; but it is enough to fill us with the hope that within the present generation the curse will be blotted out of Hinduism.

Last but not the least to mention remain the spinning-wheel and khaddar. I know that even in that direction we have done something. But it is sheer laziness and our ignorance that have left khaddar in the position in which it stands today. There is no question here of passion and prejudice as there is about the Hindu-Muslim problem. There is no question of religious intolerance as there is about untouchability. I have not yet met a single man who has told me that it is against his conscience either to turn the spinning-wheel or to wear khaddar, its product. It is the simplest A B C of economics that millions of the masses of India who have at least four months of idleness on their hands would be able to turn those four months to good use if they had the spinning-wheels in their cottages. Whilst a few pies per day may be nothing to you and to me, those few pies are a heaven-sent gift to these masses. It must be a matter of ordinary common sense to understand that if we would have our masses to spin the charkha we must first of all learn the art that has all but died out before we would take the message of hope to these cottages. You will agree that it will be easy enough for a child to understand that if the masses are to spin the charkha and weave khaddar, the classes and masses together must use and wear khaddar, and I am sorry to have to prophesy that if we have become so soft as not to be able to wear coarse khaddar, remember that there is no swaraj for us in this generation. Swaraj is a hardy tree of patient growth and therefore it requires the patient toil of hardy men and women and you will have to do what Elizabeth of old did for her own country. She prohibited the import of soft cloth from Holland and herself wore the coarse cloth that was woven for her in her own dear England and imposed that obligation upon the whole of that nation. You need not go into the complications about the question of khaddar and the spinning-wheel.

You need not bother your heads about the question whether it cannot by itself bring swaraj. Let it be a simple but easy test for you and for me. Are we or are we not ready to give half an hour to the nation and spin away for all we are worth for the sake of the nation, for the sake of identifying ourselves with the poorest in the land? Are we or are we not ready to wear such cloth as may be spun and woven by our sisters and brothers? What is better, that we send away one anna or two annas per yard of calico to Manchester or Ahmedabad or send one anna or two annas to the cottages near Madras? Which is your choice? Have you or have you not enough patriotism in yourselves to think of your near neighbours who are starving?

I am patient by nature. But patient as I am, I grow impatient when clever people talk to me all kinds of sophistries, when it is easy enough for them to understand that one yard of khaddar bought by them means at least two annas in the pockets of the poorest. I have no other and better message for our land and if I am the only one living, a solitary witness of the message, I must continue to deliver that message so long as I have life in me.

You want civil disobedience. I want it also. I know it is the only substitute for an armed revolt. It is the real test of our strength. But disobedience to be civil implies discipline, thought, care, attention. Civil disobedience and excitement and intoxication go ill together. And I know that without proper careful organization of the spinning-wheel and khaddar, there is absolutely no civil disobedience. As Lalaji well said, we may gain swaraj but we shall not have the power to retain it. He said that on another occasion, speaking on another subject; but that remark applies with equal, if not greater force, in connection with civil disobedience.

I thank you for having listened to my remarks with such great patience and courtesy. Let me hope that you will be courteous enough to translate my message into action, if it has carried conviction to you. May God give you the strength and the wisdom necessary for the purpose.

In conclusion, he asked the audience to remain quiet at their seats and let him slip out of the meeting without any disturbance whatsoever.

The Hindu, 9-3-1925

151. *REMINISCENCES OF KATHIAWAR-II*

Other States

I found that the Rulers of Porbunder, Wankaner and Wadhwan enjoyed the same popularity which I had noticed in the case of His Highness the Thakore Saheb. Each of them seemed to desire the good of the people. I was left with the impression that every one of them was trying to satisfy his subjects. However, I must say one thing. I found that in each State the Ruler's expenses exceeded his income, more or less. I am certain that a Ruler cannot justify his guardianship so long as he does not cut down his expenses. He takes a share of his subjects' earnings and offers his own services in return. One whose services are indispensable becomes the leader. He remains a true leader only so long as he is loyal. A Ruler's loyalty should mean two things. On the one hand, he must protect the welfare, freedom and virtue of his subjects and, on the other hand, he must put to good use the revenues collected from them. If the Ruler spends money on himself in an unbecoming manner, he is not utilizing the revenues properly. He may certainly spend a little more than his subjects, he may indulge in luxuries if he so wishes; there must, however, be a limit to this. As one disinterested, I can clearly see that, in this age of public awakening, such a limit is entirely essential. No institution which cannot prove its utility for the people will be able to survive long. Having observed, as much as I could in a week, four States in Kathiawar, I did find some justification for my defence of the form of Government existing there; along with this, however, its weaknesses also became apparent to me. As a well-wisher of the Rulers, I would humbly request them voluntarily to introduce the above changes, for, if they do so, not only will they gain more popularity but will enhance the prestige of their thrones. He who sets limits to his own authority, is the real Ruler. God has Himself set limits to His own power, and in spite of having the capacity to misuse that power, He does not do so. Anyone who, despite the capacity to subsist physically, renounces that capacity attains *moksha*[1]. The perfect *brahmachari*[2], by voluntarily conserving his energies, reaches such a state that finally he becomes, as it were, impotent. That state is beyond

[1] Deliverance from phenomenal existence as the supreme end of life

[2] Celibate

description. It is beyond all duality. Though he appears corporeal, he is pure and immutable spirit. That is why the English maxim says: "The king can do no wrong." The author of the *Bhagavata* says that the Radiant One can do no wrong. Tulsidas remarked in his sweet Hindi: "Oh holy man! The Mighty can have no faults." In our age, all these three maxims are being misinterpreted; and it is believed and said that the powerful one even though he commits an offence cannot be guilty. The very opposite is true. He alone is strong who never misuses his strength and voluntarily renounces the misuse of his strength, so much so that he becomes incapable of such misuse. Why cannot our Rulers become so? Is it beyond their powers?

National Schools

I witnessed the opening of two national schools. One was in Rajkot. His Highness the Thakore Saheb performed the opening ceremony at which I was present. The other was in Wadhwan. Here I myself performed the opening ceremony. Both had to face storms; both had to grapple with the problem of the *Antyajas*[1]. Both have solved that problem but are not completely out of danger. The strength of the teachers will be tested by their ability to avoid this danger. If the teachers carry on their work discreetly, peacefully, with circumspection and forbearance, they will not antagonize the people in spite of admitting *Antyajas*; and children of other castes will continue to attend the schools. The national character of the school consists in the strength of the teachers' character, their patriotism, their readiness for sacrifice and their determination. I am envious in a good-humoured way of the buildings of both the schools. These would prove a boon if austere teachers dwell there, otherwise they may bring about our downfall. In Burma there was a time when in every town sadhus taught diligently in good schools housed in good buildings. The buildings today are the same. However, when I visited those schools I found sleepy, indolent sadhus there. The schools existed merely in name. They had lost their souls. Just as admission of *Antyajas* is an essential aspect of national schools, so is the spinning-wheel. On the regular turning of that wheel depends the turn of the wheel of India's fortunes. The full development of the wheel is possible only through national schools. I look forward to its deification in every school. The teachers' service to the country will be measured by their ability to inculcate respect for it. The spinning-wheel is the only means for energizing this country which

[1] Hindus traditionally regarded as untouchables

is slumbering in idleness. As the wheel calls for disinterested labour, it yields the greatest reward; and it is beautiful work. It may at first appear monotonous, however; there is music in that monotony. It is for the teachers to train the ear for this music. I hope that both these schools will become perfect models.

To Citizens of Wadhwan

I appeal to the citizens of Rajkot and Wadhwan to take interest in their schools. My appeal is especially directed to the citizens of the latter. There was some bitterness at Wadhwan between Acharya Fulchand and the citizens. I deliberately sought an occasion to understand this matter. I met those gentlemen who had some complaints. As a result of this, I came to the conclusion that there was no cause for complaint unless it be Shri Fulchand's temper. The citizens have a prominent role under the new arrangements. The school belongs to them. It is desirable that they take part in its activities with enthusiasm. It is their duty to take such part. They did so once and they also contributed funds. Everyone said that had Shri Shivlal been alive Wadhwan would have shone out uniquely. All men, however, are mortal. We may, if we choose, immortalize those whom we love. Why cannot many wise citizens of Wadhwan become Shivlals? It is not too much to hope that the wealthy citizens of the town will take it upon themselves to finance the school. While the teachers are the souls of such institutions, the citizens should become the bodies.

Technical School

The technical school for spinning and weaving founded at Wadhwan by Shri Shivlal is also remarkable. A fair amount of propagation of khadi has been carried out by that school. However, I consider it insufficient in view of the potentialities of the villages around Wadhwan. On the principle that where nothing has been done all round, even a little effort shines out, Wadhwan may be deemed to have done well. However, we cannot rest satisfied with a little. The real question is whether Wadhwan has done all that it could. I have said already that its capacity is great. The technical school is a solid memorial to Shri Shivlal. The spinning-wheel was his life's work. I was told that he had fully understood its significance. I hope that all aspects of the art of the spinning-wheel will be developed in Wadhwan.

Three Springs

Today, there are three springs of khadi in Kathiawar—Wadhwan, Madhada and Amreli. The organizing committee has

drawn up plans to produce more khadi. However, it is desirable that these three centres should exchange their experience and enter into a healthy competition with one another. All the three centres can multiply the production of khadi. There is every hope that khadi will get encouragement from the States. Hence these centres should not falter in producing khadi. Proper steps should be taken incessantly for the propagation of khadi amongst the people. The organizing committee is primarily responsible for this. I wish that this committee should buy up all the khadi that is left over and stock it. It should take over the monopoly of khadi. What is practised by the rich in America in order to increase their wealth should be practised by us for the good of the people. In order to gain control over a certain business, they buy up the entire stock of that article and then sell it at any price they choose. Why should we not do the same for khadi in the interest of the people? In America, such monopoly is practised in order to raise prices. We shall do so in order to bring down prices. The cost of producing khadi varies at different places because there is some variation in the cost of spinning, etc. Moreover, we are seeking gifts of cotton. This is in a way a bounty or encouragement for khadi. Because of this, the committee can afford to sell khadi at a loss, whereas private organizations usually cannot do this. The former can add up the different charges, then add to it the cost of cotton received by way of gift, and then sell khadi at the price arrived at. The rate at which private organizations are to be paid can be fixed by talking the matter over with the organizations concerned. They should, however, bear the following in mind:

1. They should locally dispose of as much as possible. For instance, some of the khadi produced in Wadhwan must find a local market. In other words, the organizations concerned must make efforts for local sale.
2. The organizations should improve the quality of yarn and attend to the count and fineness.
3. The standard of weaving should be improved.
4. They should take only the cost price from the committee and satisfy the committee on this score.

This task can be achieved only when everyone works diligently, honestly and in mutual trust. We are faced with many difficulties because we have not developed either the enthusiasm or the ability to team together for public service. These organizations can keep away from all these shortcomings because their workers have a well-developed sense of public service. They are imbued with a mis-

sionary spirit and have had some experience too. They might not have learnt how to work harmoniously together and to tolerate different temperaments. Where the motives are good, experience alone will overcome the shortcomings.

IMPROVE THE SPINNING-WHEEL

Ordinarily I carry my spinning-wheel with me when I travel. However, because of my faith in Kathiawar and the reluctance to travel with excessive luggage, I did not take the spinning-wheel with me and decided to borrow one wherever I went. This gave me a good opportunity for testing [the progress of spinning]. I had hoped to get a good spinning-wheel in Rajkot, at any rate. However, I would by no means call it good. A good spinning-wheel is one the tape, belt, etc., of which are of the best quality, and its spindle is neither thin nor bent. I do not think that it passed all these tests. However, what I found intolerable was the dust that had gathered on the spinning-wheel. A workman always keeps his tools in the best shape. Why should the wheel gather dust? In Jetpur the very limit was reached. Devchandbhai hastily promised that he had an excellent spinning-wheel which he would send immediately. He had taken me to Jetpur by car. It was eleven o'clock at night but how could I go to sleep without spinning? The spinning-wheel duly arrived, but why should it work at all? The spindle worked as if it was the guest of the Girnar mountain, the tape consisted of yarn wrapped anyhow, the belt, a mere string. Ordinarily, my arm does not ache when I work on the spinning-wheel but this time I had to turn the wheel so hard that within half an hour my arm was tired. Such was Devchandbhai's fine spinning-wheel. After this bitter experience, it appeared as if Devchandbhai had called the public meeting in order to mock at the spinning-wheel. I did not spare the wheel nor its owner my rebuke at the meeting. However, in the light of the aforesaid misinterpretation of the maxim, namely, the powerful are blameless, who would put the blame on Devchandbhai's spinning-wheel? After all, he was the secretary. He himself was convinced that his spinning-wheel could not possibly be faulty. I would, therefore, like to make it publicly known that if Devchandbhai does not immediately set right his spinning-wheel, he will be removed from office.

I have had enough of joking. But even a joke has a sting. However, as the sting is merely that of conscience, it will be welcomed even though it hurts. It is difficult to get a pure and upright secretary like Devchandbhai. We should make the best use of

him that we could. Where the subjects slumber, the king cannot be awake. How could Devchandbhai be vigilant when all of us are negligent? He has understood the significance of the spinning-wheel but he did not repair or adorn it because of the slackness all around him. If he was devoted only to the spinning-wheel, the imperfection in his wheel would be unforgivable. I was a little less dissatisfied with Porbandar. The same could be said of Wankaner. This imperfection gave me an idea of the progress of the spinning-wheel in Kathiawar. The wheel has not yet secured the place of honour which it deserves. It is being tolerated but not welcomed; it is a stranger at the door and has not become an honoured guest. So long as it is not treated as an honoured guest Kathiawar will continue to starve.

I have reason to write at length about imperfections in the spinning-wheel. It is easy to find fault with it. My suggestions are as follows:

1. The secretaries should keep account of the spinning-wheels.
2. An expert or two should be appointed to go round and examine each spinning-wheel.
3. Owners should be invited to register complaints about their spinning-wheels.
4. The spindles, etc., of the wheels in use should be repaired. Large spindles may be replaced by rods with necessary modifications.
5. The expert should explain all the changes to the owners.
6. In every town which he visits, he should train a local expert and maintain a list of these experts.
7. The expert should keep a record of the output of each spinning-wheel and the hours for which it is used.

If work is done systematically in this manner, a great improvement will be noticed within a short time in the spinning-wheel and its yarn output. I found that whereas I can easily turn out a hundred yards of yarn on my spinning-wheel, on these other wheels I could hardly spin fifty. Moreover, except in Rajkot nowhere else did I experience the pleasure that one has while plying a good spinning-wheel. Before the end of this year, not only should khadi gain a firm foothold in Kathiawar, but we should acquire such skill as to be able to weave fine saris. I found that Yashodabehn had had hand-spun dhotis woven for her husband, Dahyabhai. These could compete with the fine dhotis made in Andhra. Why cannot hundreds of men and women spin such fine yarn?

POLITICS

The division of labour agreed to at the time of the conference was as follows—the people should spin, wear khadi, and I should take care of political matters. I have already explained its implications, yet it is necessary to explain them again. This is what it means. Just as the people must actively fulfil their own pledge, similarly I too must be alert and fulfil mine. The people can, by being vigilant, fulfil their pledge and succeed therein. This is because the key to success is in their own hands. It is possible that, in spite of my vigilance and in spite of fulfilling my pledge, I may not succeed, because my success depends on others. Moreover, my success too is dependent on the people's fulfilment of their pledge. It is sad that it should still be necessary to explain how politics is linked with yarn. The collective strength of the people lies in spinning yarn. I am convinced that its invisible power will influence everything. Whether this is true or not, it is necessary that the people realize the implication of my pledge. There is no guarantee that I will indeed be able to achieve something. I have only pointed out to the people the path which I consider the best. A nation cannot achieve anything through demonstrations alone. We should also understand the situation of the Rulers. Our purpose is not served by mere condemnation or criticism. In order to understand this situation, I advised the conference to refrain from passing resolutions on political matters. I have pledged myself to examine the matter as thoroughly as possible in my capacity as the president. I am striving to fulfil the pledge. I am not reclining at ease, nor shall I do so. However, this does not mean that those who are suffering should seek no remedy. My advice merely means that the conference can assist in the above manner. It should be clearly understood that I am in no way opposed to people adopting whatever truthful and peaceful means they prefer to redress their grievances. The conference should give all possible assistance. At the moment, that assistance has taken the form of my using all my powers of persuasion with those States against which complaints have been made. Success depends on the purity of the issue and the persons concerned and on the people's fulfilment of their own pledge. The people too must create an impression by their vigilant work. They will gain self-confidence if they preserve their self-respect by means of constructive work. Today, the people of Kathiawar, like those elsewhere, have lost their self-respect. My experience suggests that in many States of Kathiawar, the conditions are such that the people can make as much progress as they wish.

Some facilities that are absent in British India are available to the people of the States of Kathiawar. The people can take full advantage of these only by engaging themselves in constructive work.

FIRST OF APRIL

I have taken such a fancy for Kathiawar that I have arranged to visit it again in April. I had to see the *Antyaja* school at Botad, the khadi centre at Amreli and the Ashram at Madhada. This, however, was not possible during my last visit. Those who wish to take me to different places should arrange my April programme in consultation with Devchandbhai and the Amreli office. I hope that no one will wish to take me to a single place where khadi is not the attraction. I expect to see a large number of members enrolled in April. I also hope that cotton which was promised has already been collected and more promises secured; and lastly, those centres which were to be opened under the Rajkot resolution have started working.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 8-3-1925

152. MY NOTES

A SISTER'S SENTIMENTS

Bhai Vitthaldas Jerajani writes:[1]

This feeling is understandable. Anyone who has worn khadi spun by himself and woven by himself or others can realize the value of the pearl-like tears which have fallen from this sister's eyes. A certain gentleman had lost a towel made of self-spun yarn. He was restless with anxiety so long as it was not traced. We attach no value to a match-stick or a pin but what would be our attitude if we had made it ourselves? The same sweetness and sentiment that one sees in food cooked by oneself one also finds in hand-spun, hand-woven khadi.

AMONG "KALIPARAJ"

The following is an extract from a letter I have received from the Vedchhi Khadi Ashram:[2]

[1] The letter is not translated here. It described the pain felt by a certain lady when a sari woven from her own yarn was temporarily misplaced.

[2] The letter is not translated here. It described the progress and the benevolent effects of khadi work among *Kaliparaj*, a backward community in Gujarat.

The experience of this correspondent is shared by others in many places. The spinning-wheel has become the focal point for nation-building.

What Is Required in Education

An educationist writes as follows:[1]

The reader will see that these ideas are contrary to those of Dr. Sumant Mehta. There is truth in both these view-points. It would be good if both were put into practice. However, we do not always have the strength to do everything that is good. Experience alone will determine the ultimate shape of education. It is not our indifference to chemistry and other such subjects but rather lack of equipment which is responsible for our not teaching them at the moment. It is for this very reason that only the most important things have been accommodated. The spinning-wheel is the symbol of industry. When it is firmly established in its proper place, the sciences and crafts of the blacksmith, the carpenter and others will automatically find a place. There is no doubt that our efforts should be to meet the needs of all the four castes. I can see that we are making progress in that direction. If all educationists who put their faith in national education continue the work assigned to them with faith and courage, the desired changes will come about of their own accord. Where the intention is honest, success is inevitable. I observed during my tour that people are prepared, or almost anxious, to contribute funds for these activities, but we have a dearth of men with conviction and competence.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 8-3-1925

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent pleaded for all-round education.

153. SPEECH IN REPLY TO CORPORATION ADDRESS, ERNAKULAM

March 8, 1925

I thank you very sincerely for the address and the sentiments expressed in it. It is a matter of great sorrow to me that, at the present moment, I have not beside me my friend Maulana Shaukat Ali or Maulana Mahomed Ali. As you know we had become almost inseparable in all our travels in India. One of the brothers, however, is today immersed in his journalism and the other Big Brother has practically buried himself in and about Bombay. As I have arrived in this Presidency purely for the sake of visiting Vykom and entering the zone, where my work chiefly lies, during the present visit, it pleases me to receive this address from you. This is an errand of peace and I want all the assistance that I can receive from public opinion throughout the length and breadth of this land. Above all, I want the prayers of those who believe in prayers, whether they are Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians, Jews or Parsis. Whatever faith they may belong to, if they believe in prayers I want their prayers for the success of my mission.

There are other things also in which I am interested and in which you should also be interested. It makes no difference whatsoever whether you belong to British India proper or to one of the Protected States. I refer to Hindu-Muslim unity which is a form of unity amongst all the races professing the various religions of India. I know that in this State you have no such question, as I understand, as between Hindus and Muslims or between Hindus and other races. It is a matter of great pleasure to me to find that in this State all the races are living in peace, amity and brotherhood. Let that state of things last for ever. But I am afraid I am unable to pay you the same tribute so far as the spinning-wheel is concerned. I took the opportunity, in replying to the address of the Madras Corporation, of mentioning the fact that no municipality's work in India can be considered to be complete until that municipality had identified itself with the lowest of its citizens. One often learns that the order is really reversed, that is to say, the municipalities give to those who have much and take away much from those who have very little. They care more for the rich and the powerful and little or less

for the poor and down-trodden. ("Hear, hear.") I hope that it is not true of this town and that you are observing the proper order of things. I therefore suggest the spinning-wheel only by way of addition. It is to me a symbol of inseparable connection between the rich and the poor. It is the one certain definite solution for the poverty of the masses of India. I ask you therefore to introduce the spinning-wheel in your schools and also its product, khaddar. I ask you to give it a sacred place in your homes as it occupied years and years ago. I have not hesitated to call it one of the *yajnas* of this age and as the great ones do, so do the lower order of beings follow. You will not therefore be able successfully to carry the message of the spinning-wheel to the humble homes of India, unless you adopt it yourselves. May you have the courage and the strength and the goodwill to follow the advice that I have humbly tendered to you!

The Hindu, 9-3-1925

154. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, COCHIN

March 8, 1925

FRIENDS,

It gives me much pleasure to be able to meet you. When I decided to come to Vykom, I little thought that it would be possible and necessary for me to stay here before proceeding there. I know that yours is a historic city. It is full of all kinds of vivid recollections, not all of them of a pleasant type. Living on the seaside you are aware of what adventure can do. The sea is an epitome of adventures. At the present moment, however, I am not concerned with the adventures that the sea offers. What we need is the spirit of adventure in our national life and if we find that we have made but little progress towards our goal, it is because the spirit of adventure is absent from us. It requires for instance an adventurous spirit to find out in the Hindu religion its black spots. Those who are not fired with that spirit are satisfied with things as they are. They do not stop to enquire whether they are good or bad; but ever since I have been in India, after my sojourn in South Africa for a period of nearly 20 years, I have been telling the Hindus that we have in our religion a black spot which must be removed. It is untouchability and here I am sorry to add also unapproachability. I have not come in order to argue

with the orthodox people. I have come with a message of peace. I want to plead wisdom and tell them that this untouchability and unapproachability cannot be part of Hinduism. I have come to tell them that the satyagrahis who are fighting against enormous odds at Vykom are not out to destroy religion, but to reform it. I have come to tell them of all the implications of this struggle. I have come to tell them also that it is wrong for us to be satisfied with things as they are, if we find that they are bad. It, therefore, gives me pleasure that I shall be carrying with me your blessings and your sympathy, for in the address presented to me on your behalf by the municipality I am assured of your sympathy and support. I want you also to carry the same spirit a little further and I want you to find with me that one of the most potent causes of the ever-deepening poverty of the masses is that they have nothing to do for nearly a third part of the year throughout India. I would like you to discover with me that if we give them the spinning-wheel which had a place in every home in India only a hundred years ago, they will find enough to occupy themselves during their leisure hours. But the introduction of the spinning-wheel in the millions of our homes will be a perfectly useless thing if we do not discard the use of foreign cloth or mill-made cloth.

In going about, therefore, from place to place I am pleading with those men and women whom I see that it is their bounden duty to discard the use of foreign cloth and mill-made cloth and replace it with hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. For you in Malabar plenty of clothing is a burden. I have no doubt that I am an object of envy with most of you. In this weather of ours the least we have in the shape of clothing the better it is from every point of view. I wish you will not run away with the idea that dignity or civilization requires multiplication of clothing. (Laughter and "hear, hear!") "Handsome is not who is handsome clothed, but handsome is who handsome does." The truest test of civilization, culture and dignity is character and not clothing. I feel overwhelmed with sorrow whenever I find the people in India telling me that they have outgrown khaddar and that it is impossible for them to return to the savage days when our ancestors were satisfied with khaddar clothing. I would like you to answer with me the critics who think in that way, that the best way of ridding India of the curse of poverty and pauperism is for one and all of us to be dressed in khaddar. Those of you who will go in for fineries and fineness, it is possible for you to get as fine a hand-spun yarn as you wish to. I

hope therefore that you will tax yourselves, tax your minds and dot every home in Cochin with the spinning-wheel and see to it that everyone in Cochin uses khaddar and nothing else.

I need say nothing about the Hindu-Muslim question. I know that you miss the presence of one of the Ali Brothers. It has been usual for one of them to be touring with me throughout India. But it was not possible to do so this time. But I wish to congratulate you on the freedom from this taxing problem in your midst. It is a matter of great pleasure to me to find that all the communities belonging to the different religions are living in a spirit of goodwill and brotherhood in this State. I wish that we could in every part of India copy your worthy examples. May God give you the strength and the wisdom to introduce khaddar and the spinning-wheel in your homes and to rid Hinduism of the curse of untouchability! May all the races inhabiting this fair land remain for ever united as they are today!

The Hindu, 9-3-1925

155. LETTER TO SUBRAMANIAM

[March 9, 1925][1]

SUBRA[MANIAM]

I thank you for your letter. I shall gladly wait on you and the other friends at the District Magistrate's house at 8 a. m. tomorrow. All those whom you mention and any others you may choose may be present at the interview. For my part I shall not bring any person beyond the ones mentioned by you. But as Sjt. Krishnaswami Iyer is not here, subject to your approval I propose to bring with me Sjt. Kelappan Nair who has taken Sjt. Krishnaswami's place.

I appreciate and reciprocate your wish that there should be no ill feeling between the parties. Indeed we should be able to tolerate one another's opinions.

What I am looking forward to is not anybody's authority but Shankaracharya's[2] in favour of unapproachability as defined by you and the other friends. Nothing would please me better than to see this question settled amicably, satisfactorily and consistent

[1] The interview referred to in the letter took place on March 10, 1925.

[2] Eighth-century philosopher; eminent exponent of *Advaita Vedanta*

with the dignity and the purity of the faith which you and I hold in common.

I remain,
Yours in the service
of the faith,

[PS.]

I am sorry I do not know Malayalam. It will be difficult for you to get my Hindi translated. I therefore send you my reply in English.

From a microfilm: S.N. 10594

156. LETTER TO DR. VARADARAJULU NAIDU

March 10, 1925

DEAR DR. VARADARAJULU,

With reference to the Gurukul controversy[1] I told Mr. Iyer[2] that I would not give a definite opinion unless I had seen you and heard you. Having heard you, it seems to me that in so far as the present *brahmacharis* are concerned, if the parents of the Brahmin boys insist on their boys being allowed to dine separately, their scruples should be respected. But, for the future, it may be announced that no *brahmacharis* would be accepted whose parents would not let their boys dine in the same row with the others. I understand from you that the cook at the Gurukul would be always a Brahmin. What you object to (and that properly) is the separating of non-Brahmin boys from the Brahmins. I do think that all the boys should sit in the same row whilst they are taking their meals.

Yours sincerely,
M. K. GANDHI

The Hindu, 21-3-1925

[1] The question of inter-dining at the Tamil Gurukul at Shermadevi
[2] V. V. S. Iyer of the Gurukul

157. DISCUSSION WITH CASTE HINDU LEADERS, VYKOM[1]

[*March 10, 1925*]

GANDHIJI: Is it fair to exclude a whole section of Hindus, because of their supposed lower birth, from public roads which can be used by non-Hindus, by criminals and bad characters, and even by dogs and cattle?

NAMBUDIRI TRUSTEE: How can it be helped? They are reaping the reward of their karma.

G. No doubt they are suffering for their karma by being born as untouchables. But why must you add to the punishment? Are they worse than even criminals and beasts?

N. They must be so, for otherwise God would not have condemned them to be born untouchables.

G. But God may punish them. Who are we human beings to take the place of God and add to the punishment?

N. We are but instruments. God uses us as His instruments in order to impose on them the punishment that their karma has earned for them.

G. But supposing the *avarnas* said that they were instruments in the hands of God in order to impose afflictions on you? What would you do?

N. Then Government would stand between them and us and prevent them from so doing. Good men would do so. Mahatmaji, we beseech you to prevent the *avarnas* from depriving us of our age-old privileges.

G. Will you prove to me that you are entitled to prevent them from using the roads? I am sure that the suppressed classes have as much right to use the roads as you have. The Shastras nowhere lay down that they may not use these roads.

[1] In a brief report of this, *The Hindu*, 11-3-1925, said: "Early morning yesterday Mr. Gandhi joined in the satyagrahi's prayers. . . . Mr. Gandhi met by invitation the local orthodox caste Hindu oppositionist leaders at the residence of Indanthurithi Nambyathiri. Among those who accompanied Mr. Gandhi were Messrs Rajagopalachari, Mahadev Desai, Ramdas Gandhi and Krishnaswami Iyer. He discussed with them for over three hours and made certain practical proposals with a view to bringing the struggle to a speedy termination. These alternative proposals were an arbitration, a referendum, an examination by select pandits of the Sankara *Smritis*. The oppositionists did not choose to accept any of these."

Do you know that even the Dewan thinks that you have taken up a wrong attitude?

N. How does the Dewan's opinion help us? He is welcome to hold what opinion he likes. And why, Mahatmaji, do you use the word "suppressed" for these classes? Do you know why they are "suppressed"?

G. Oh, yes! Just for the same reason that Dyer massacred the innocents in Jallianwala.

N. So you think those who introduced the custom were Dyers? You would call Shankaracharya a Dyer?

G. I am calling no Acharya a Dyer. But I do characterize your action as Dyerism, and if indeed any Acharya was responsible for introducing this custom his ignorance was as monstrous as that of General Dyer.

N. But how can we give up an ancient custom? You say the satyagrahis are going through suffering. Suffering is entirely on our side. The satyagrahis sit at the gates of the temples. Their shadow would pollute us and so we have to take a long and circuitous way to the temple. Is that not a great hardship?

G. That surely is extraordinary. It reminds one of the old story of the wolf and the lamb. I beseech you to talk with some reason at least.

N. Reason is out of place in matters religious.

G. If this is an ancient *sanatani* custom it must obtain everywhere in India. But I do not find it in any other part of the country.

N. Surely untouchability is there in every part of India. We carry untouchability a little further. That is all.

G. You say these people are worse than criminals. Supposing they became Mussalmans or Christians tomorrow. Would they then cease to be criminals?

(The Nambudiri remained silent. But the Devaswom Commissioner answered on his behalf: No *fresh* Christian or Mussalman convert would have the right. It is old Christians and Mussalmans who enjoy the right.)

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI (who was present at the interview): So Christians and Mussalmans may upset God's rules and regulations?

(No Reply.)

G. You cite Shankaracharya's authority in support of your contention. Will you show it to me?

N. Yes,

G. And if Shankaracharya's books do not support the custom will you withdraw your opposition?

N. There is enough evidence there. But of course you may explain it away.

G. No, I will not explain it away. We will have it interpreted by recognized pandits.

N. If the interpretation goes against the custom we cannot accept it.

G. So then there is no authority in Shankaracharya's books, but in your own lack of reason? Well, supposing the court were to decide that the roads should be opened to the *avarnas*?

N. We should use the roads no longer, and we should leave the temples.

G. And if the Maharaja were to issue a *smriti* throwing open the roads like the Shankaracharya *Smriti* that you claim there is in support of the prohibition, what will you do?

N. The State has authority to issue what *smriti* it likes. We should have to obey it.

G. I beseech you not to forget that you are the trustee of Hinduism, and I hope you will not besmirch its fair name. Well, let me suggest a compromise. Would you accept a referendum?

N. A referendum of only the temple-going public?

G. That's not fair. I mean a referendum of all *savarnas*, I don't say of all *avarnas*. That should satisfy you.

(No reply.)

G. Another suggestion. Supposing we ask a recognized pandit in India to interpret the Shankara *Smriti*? Would you accept his interpretation?

N. There may be no authority in the *Smriti*, but there would be sufficient authority found in the commentary on the *Smriti*.

(An old man at this stage exclaimed: It was Parashurama who gave us the whole of Malabar. Now if you were to ask us to produce Parashurama's charter, how can we do so? Similar is the present right. How can we produce authority for it?)

G. A last alternative. Would you accept arbitration? You appoint a pandit, I appoint a pandit on behalf of the satyagrahis, and the Dewan acts as Umpire. What do you say to that?

(No reply.)

The Epic of Travancore, pp, 17-21

158. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, VYKOM

March 10, 1925

FRIENDS,

I know you will excuse me for not standing up to speak to you, and I hope you will also excuse me for being a few minutes late. I can only give you my assurance that my being late was due to no delay on my part. I have been occupied the whole day long with the mission that has brought me here. It gives me very great pleasure to see such a large assembly here, because it enables me to tell you the purpose of my mission.

At the outset, however, I wish to thank all those who presented me with addresses yesterday; at the time the address was presented, a letter was delivered into my hands protesting against that address and assuring me that it did not represent the sentiments of all the people in Vykom ("Shame!"). I gladly accept that protest and inform you of it. The very fact of the letter having been signed by a few gentlemen shows at least that they were not in sympathy with the address or rather the wording of it. Nor does it surprise me that the address did not carry the consent of all the people of Vykom. I know that you are unfortunately divided here over a very vital question. So far as I am concerned, I would be happier without any address whatsoever, but when I do receive addresses, they give me a topic of conversation with the meetings which I address and this address does show that in a most particular manner. I thank those who have presented me with the address this evening also. That too deals with the subject that has brought me here and that is the subject of untouchability and unapproachability and the method, namely, satyagraha, adopted in Vykom in order to rid this place of unapproachability in a particular way. As you are aware, that struggle from its very inception has commanded my deep admiration and sympathy. It is possible that the conductors of satyagraha may have made mistakes in the campaign. Who is there in the world who is infallible? But I am satisfied that the mistakes, if any were committed, were not deliberate. Satyagraha, like the name itself, is a somewhat new doctrine, or rather a new presentation of an old doctrine.

The question of untouchability is one which lends itself to the method of satyagraha in a peculiar manner, for satyagraha

is a method of suffering, not suffering imposed upon those who are opposed to you, but suffering imposed upon oneself. Now the position taken up by the satyagrahis at Vykom is that the roads that pass by the great temple should be open to those who are considered to be untouchables or unapproachables. The claim is based upon humanity itself. Any road which is open to the public, so far as Hindus are concerned, any road that is open to those who are caste Hindus, should and does claim to be open to those who are thrown out of caste and considered untouchables or unapproachables. In my humble opinion, it is a natural and just claim. As you know, ever since I set my foot on Indian soil after a long exile in South Africa, I have been speaking frankly, fearlessly and freely on the question of untouchability. I claim to be a *sanatani* Hindu. I claim to know sufficient of the Shastras for my own purpose and I venture to suggest that untouchability and unapproachability, as they are practised in this holy land of ours, have no place or sanction in the Hindu Shastras. ("Hear, hear", and cheers.) Neither approve nor disapprove, but simply listen to my remarks. I venture to suggest to those who are professors of Hinduism, who hold Hinduism as dear as life itself, that Hinduism like every other religion, apart from the sanction of Sha stras, has got to submit itself to the test of universal reason. In this age of reason, in this age of universal knowledge, in this age of education and comparative theology, any religion which entrenches itself behind Shastric injunctions and authority is, in my own humble opinion, bound to fail. In my opinion, untouchability is a blot upon humanity and therefore upon Hinduism. It cannot stand the test of reason. It is in conflict with the fundamental precepts of Hinduism. The first among the three principles I am about to enunciate of Hinduism is *Satyannasti paro dharmah,*[1] i.e., there is no religion other than or higher than truth. The second is *Ahimsa paramo dharmah* and if ahimsa, meaning love, non-violence, is the law of life, is the greatest religion, is the only religion, then I suggest to you that untouchability is in direct conflict with that truth. The third is that God alone is Truth and everything else is transitory and illusory. If it is so, I suggest to you that it is impossible for us to reconcile untouchability and unapproachability with the grand doctrine. I have come, therefore, to reason with my orthodox friends. I have come to plead with them, and by their courtesy and goodwill. I was able to wait upon them this afternoon. They gave me a patient hearing

[1] *Mahabharata*, Shantiparva, Ch. 160

and listened to me. We argued, I appealed to their reason, I appealed to their humanity, I appealed to the Hinduism in them. I am sorry to confess to you that I was not able to produce an impression that I had expected I would be able to do. But "despair" is a term which does not occur in my dictionary. (Laughter.) I shall despair when I despair of myself, of God and humanity. But as I believe in God, as I believe in the fact that we are all met here together and as I believe also in humanity, because I see that in spite of all our differences, all our quarrels, humanity lives on, I believe also that the truth that I claim I represent for the time being, will impress itself upon my orthodox friends here.

I have made three sporting offers to these friends of mine. In the name and on behalf of the satyagrahis of Vykom, those offers are binding on me, but I have left them free to reject or accept them. I have pleaded with them that they should accept these offers even though it may be by way of trial. I have not hesitated to enter into such unilateral contract because I believe in the truth that I implicitly believe and stand for. For I have come not to precipitate and enhance the quarrel, but to bring about peace and goodwill between the orthodox section and those who are today trying to act in the name of humanity and justice. Though I may seem at times to be fighting, my purpose is never to fight, nor have I undertaken a fight to prolong it, but to bring about peace at the shortest possible notice. An English friend when I embarked upon non-co-operation, told me that my non-co-operation was only skin-deep but that I was pining for co-operation. I immediately closed with him and I told him that he had read my heart correctly, and so it is with my orthodox friends, I assure them. Satyagraha is there, but to be called off as soon as they wish it, it is for them to make a sporting offer and it will be accepted, only let them beware of murdering truth. A satyagrahi has always his minimum and it is the minimum that is wanted in connection with this struggle. The right of way is such a reasonable demand that it has only to be asked to be given. Let it be understood, therefore, that there is no mental reservation behind this struggle.

I have repeatedly told the Hindus of India what the removal of untouchability means to me and to those who are today engaged in that holy campaign. It does not mean the breaking up of *Varnashrama dharma*. It does not mean inter-dining or intermarriages. But it does mean the common relations between man and man that should exist in any civilized society. It does mean that places of worship should be open if they are at all

open to anybody, to all those who are considered Hindus. But I grant that if there is a particular class, say, Brahmins, who want to build temples and exclude non-Brahmins from them, I say that it is their right to do so. But if there is a temple which is open to non-Brahmins also, then there is no such thing as a fifth caste which may be put out of that temple. I see no warrant for such an exclusion in the Hindu Shastras. Similarly I claim that public places such as schools should be open alike to the untouchables, if they are open to other classes. So would it be with watering places such as wells, lakes and rivers. That is the whole of my claim on behalf of those who are engaged in this campaign against untouchability and unapproachability.

Let me, however, clear the position a little so far as Vykom is concerned. The present satyagraha is merely directed towards vindicating the right of the unapproachables to pass through the roads through which Christians and Mussalmans and caste Hindus are entitled to pass. Satyagrahis today are not fighting for entry into temples. They are not fighting—I do not know if there is any prohibition in the schools of Travancore—they are not fighting for admission in the schools, not that such is not their claim. But I am presenting you today the implications of the present struggle. Since satyagraha is a method of conversion and conviction, it seeks never to use the slightest coercion. I therefore gladly endorse in its entirety the remarks made by the Dewan Sahib in his address[1] to the Travancore Assembly, and if I find the satyagrahis in Vykom in denial of their own faith use violence or any other method in order to put undue pressure upon the orthodox Hindus of Vykom, you will find me, on proof given to me, entirely dissociating myself from those satyagrahis so-called. But so long as satyagrahis keep within the terms of their contract, so long shall I consider it to be my bounden duty to give them all the assistance that a single, humble individual is capable of giving. I plead, therefore, with all the force at my command that the orthodox Brahmins and non-Brahmins of Vykom who may be opposed to this campaign study it in all its bearings, to apply their reason to bear upon the struggle and stand for justice and humanity; if they find that this struggle is just and the means adopted by the satyagrahis to vindicate the right of humanity are also fair, reasonable and non-violent.

I am glad to be able to bear my testimony to the happy relations that have hitherto subsisted generally between the police

[1] *Vide* Appendix I.

authorities and the satyagrahis; they have shown how a decent gentlemanly battle can be carried on without any vexation, without any hard swearing and without violence. I know that prejudices die hard. Untouchability is an error of long standing. I have, therefore, told my satyagrahi friends that they will have to exercise tremendous patience. Time is always on the side of those who will wait upon it. Public opinion, I hope, even of Vykom, is on their side. Public opinion outside Vykom, I know, is on their side. The world opinion is growing strong on their side and if the satyagrahis will only play the game well, have patience and will be able to endure silent and slow sufferings, I have no doubt that victory is theirs. The Government of Travancore, so far as I can see from the address of the Dewan Sahib, has held the scales evenly between the two parties. I know that my satyagrahi friends here shook their heads when I told them that the presentation by the Dewan was not open to exception. Whatever the truth may be, there is no doubt about it that the credit will be yours if the two sections of the community meet together and find a reasonable and honourable solution for the difficulty without the intervention of the Government. The Dewan himself, so far as his own opinion is concerned, has told the orthodox people where his opinion lies. He invites them to march with the times, to recognize the time spirit. I hope my orthodox friends will listen to the sound advice given by him. In any event, I give them my best assurance that no matter what they think of it, no matter how they behave, whether they accept my offers or reject them, I shall only do according to the behests of the Hindu religion as I know it. I recongnize no one as my enemy on the face of the earth. I shall, therefore, love them in spite of differences between them and myself. I shall ever pray to God that he may guide their steps in the right direction, open the eyes of their understanding, open their eyes to the writing on the wall and render justice to these down-trodden countrymen of ours. I am humble enough also to pray to God at the same time that if I have misread the Hindu Shastras, if I have misread humanity, and have erred in giving the advice that I have tendered to the satyagrahis, He will open my eyes also, show me my error and give me strength and the necessary courage to acknowledge my error and apologize to my orthodox friends.

One thing more and I have done. When there is a difference between you and me on the question of untouchability, I hope there is no question of difference of opinion about another matter which also concerns the poorest of the land. I refer to the

spinning-wheel and khaddar. You owe it to the poorest in the land to find a sacred corner in your homes for the spinnng-wheel and you owe it to them that you wear the product of the spinning-wheel and place a few coppers in the pockets of the poorest of your countrymen and countrywomen. I shall not be satisfied as I have said repeatedly until the prince and the peasant, the Viceroy and his page, are clad from top to toe in khaddar, hand-spun and hand-made.

The third thing I need not mention to you, namely, the Hindu-Muslim unity. You have in this connection much to teach to the rest of India. All the different races and communities belonging to different religions, I am happy to be able to know and testify, are living in perfect harmony and friendship in Travancore. I hope that the rest of India will copy the admirable spirit which actuates you. I thank you all for the very patient hearing you have kindly given to me and I now close with the hope and fervent prayer that the battle that is going on in Vykom may end in the only manner it should. (Cheers.)

The Hindu, 16-3-1925

159. TALK TO INMATES OF SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM, VYKOM[1]

[*March 11, 1925*][2]

(The following is almost a verbatim report of the quiet talk I gave to the inmates of the Satyagraha Ashram at Vykom. The Ashram has at the present moment over fifty volunteers who stand or squat in front of the four barricades which are put up to guard the four entrances to the Vykom temple. They spin whilst they are stationed there and remain there at a stretch for six hours. They are sent in two relays. I reproduce the talk as being of general interest and applicable to all satyagrahis. M.K.G.)

I am sorry that I shall be going away today without having a chat with you which I would regard as complete and satisfactory. But it seems it is not possible to do more. Those in charge of arrangements about my programme are of opinion that I ought to see, in order to help the cause, more places than Vykom. I have yielded to their advice but my own conviction based on past experience is that the success of the movement depends more on

[1] In *Young India*, this was published under the caption' 'Satyagrahi's Duty''.
[2] From *The Hindu*, 14-3-1925

yourselves than on outside support. If there is nothing in you, any amount of enthusiasm brought about by a passing visit like mine will be of no avail. But if I had not come here and there had been no enthusiasm on the part of the public, and if you had been true to yourselves there would have been nothing wanting. Your work would have commanded all the enthusiasm that might have been needed for a cause like this. Therefore if I could have passed here a longer time than I have, it would have been more profitable. However, that could not be done in face of the advice of friends who are guiding me.

But I want to tell you as briefly as I can what I expect of you. I would ask you to forget the political aspect of the programme. Political consequences of this struggle there are, but you are not to concern yourselves with them. If you do, you will miss the true result and also miss the political consequences, and when the real heat of the struggle is touched you will be found wanting. I am therefore anxious, even if it frightens you, to explain to you the true nature of the struggle. It is a struggle deeply religious for the Hindus. We are endeavouring to rid Hinduism of its greatest blot. The prejudice we have to fight against is an age-long prejudice. The struggle for the opening of the roads round the temple which we hold to be public to the unapproachables is but a small skirmish in the big battle. If our struggle was to end with the opening of the roads in Vykom you may be sure I would not have bothered my head about it. If therefore you think that the struggle is to end with opening of the roads in Vykom to the unapproachables you are mistaken. The road must be opened. It has got to be opened. But that will be the beginning of the end. The end is to get all such roads throughout Travancore to be opened to the unapproachables; and not only that, but we expect that our efforts may result in amelioration of the general condition of the untouchables and unapproachables. That will require tremendous sacrifice. For our aim is not to do things by violence to opponents. That will be conversion by violence or compulsion, and if we import compulsion in matters of religion, there is no doubt that we shall be committing suicide. We should carry on this struggle on the lines of strict non-violence, i.e., by suffering in our own persons. That is the meaning of satyagraha. The question is whether you are capable of every suffering that may be imposed upon you or may be your lot in the journey towards the goal. Even whilst you are suffering, you may have no bitterness—no trace of it—against your opponents. And I tell you it is not a mechanical act at all. On

the contrary I want you to feel like loving your opponents and the way to do it is to give them the same credit for honesty of purpose which you would claim for yourself. I know that it is a difficult task. I confess that it was a difficult task for me yesterday whilst I was talking to those friends who insisted on their right to exclude the unapproachables from the temple roads. I confess there was selfishness behind their talk. How then was I to credit them with honesty of purpose? I was thinking of this thing yesterday and also this morning, and this is what I did. I asked myself: "Wherein was their selfishness or self-interest? It is true that they have their ends to serve. But so have we our ends to serve. Only we consider our ends to be pure and therefore selfless. But who is to determine where selflessness ends and selfishness begins. Selflessness may be the purest form of selfishness." I do not say this for the sake of argument. But that is what I really feel. I am considering their condition of mind from their point of view and not my own. Had they not been Hindu they would not have talked as they did yesterday. And immediately we begin to think of things as our opponents think of them we shall be able to do them full justice. I know that this requires a detached state of mind, and it is a state very difficult to reach. Nevertheless for a satyagrahi it is absolutely essential. Three fourths of the miseries and misunderstandings in the world will disappear, if we step into the shoes of our adversaries and understand their standpoint. We will then agree with our adversaries quickly or think of them charitably. In our case there is no question of our agreeing with them quickly as our ideals are radically different. But we may be charitable to them and believe that they actually mean what they say. They do not want to open the roads to the unapproachables. Now whether it is their self-interest or ignorance that tells them to say so, we really believe that it is wrong of them to say so. Our business therefore is to show them that they are in the wrong and we should do so by our suffering. I have found that mere appeal to reason does not answer where prejudices are age-long and based on supposed religious authority. Reason has to be strengthened by suffering and suffering opens the eyes of understanding. Therefore there must be no trace of compulsion in our acts. We must not be impatient, and we must have an undying faith in the means we are adopting. The means we are adopting just now are that we approach the four barricades and as we are stopped there we sit down and spin away from day to day, and we must believe that through it the roads must be opened. I

know that it is a difficult and slow process. But if you believe in the efficacy of satyagraha you will rejoice in this slow torture and suffering, and you will not feel the discomfort of your position as you go and sit in the boiling sun from day to day. If you have faith in the cause and the means and in God the hot sun will be cool for you. You must not be tired and say "how long", and never get irritated. That is only a small portion of your penance for the sin for which Hinduism is responsible.

I regard you as soldiers in this campaign. It is not possible for you to reason out things for yourselves. You have come to the Ashram because you have faith in the management. That does not mean faith in me. For I am not manager. I am directing the movement so far as ideals and general direction are concerned. Your faith therefore must be in those who are managers for the time being. The choice before coming to the Ashram was yours. But having made your choice and come to the Ashram it is not for you to reason why. If we are to become a powerful nation you must obey all directions that may be given to you from time to time. That is the only way in which either political or religious life can be built up. You must have determined for yourselves certain principles and you must have joined the struggle in obedience to those principles. Those who remain in the Ashram are taking as much part in the struggle as those who go and offer satyagraha at the barricades. Every piece of work in connection with the struggle is just as important as any other piece, and therefore the work of sanitation in the Ashram is just as important as spinning away at the barricades. And if in this place the work of cleaning the closets and compound is more distasteful than spinning it should be considered far more important and profitable. Not a single minute should be wasted in idle conversation, but we must be absorbed in the work before us and if everyone of us works in that spirit you will see that there is pleasure in the work itself. Every bit of property, anything in the Ashram, should be regarded by you as your own property and not property that can be wasted at pleasure. You may not waste a grain of rice or a scrap of paper, and similarly a minute of your time. It is not ours. It belongs to the nation and we are trustees for the use of it.

I know that all this will sound hard and difficult for you. My presentation may be hard, but it has not been possible for me to present the thing in any other way. For it will be wrong on my part if I deceive you or myself in believing that this is an easy thing.

Much corruption has crept into our religion. We have become lazy as a nation, we have lost the time sense. Selfishness dominates our action. There is mutual jealousy amongst the tallest of us. We are uncharitable to one another. And if I did not draw your attention to the things I have, it will not be possible for us to rid ourselves of all these evils. Satyagraha is a relentless search for truth and a determination to search truth. I can only hope you will realize the import of what you are doing. And if you do, your path will be easy—easy because you will take delight in difficulties and you will laugh in hope when everybody is in despair. I believe in the illustrations *rishis* or poets have given in religious books. For example, I literally believe in the possibility of a Sudhanva[1] smiling away whilst he was being drowned in the boiling oil. For to him it was greater torture to forget his Maker than to be in boiling oil. And so it can be in a lesser measure here, if we have a spark of Sudhanva's faith in this struggle.[2]

Mahatmaji was then put a series of questions by the workers. Mr. T. R. Krishnaswamy Iyer, M.A.,B.L., asked how long the struggle should be continued. Mahatmaji said:

I do not know. It may last a few days, or for ever. I embarked on the South African struggle fancying that it would be over in a month's time but it lasted eight years.

Asked as to why batches in large numbers should not be sent to the barricades, he stated that it would result in disturbance and misunderstanding, and secondly, they had not sufficient numbers for the purpose. He thought good deal must be done by way of consolidating public opinion. It was claimed that public opinion was on their side which was correct to a certain extent, but that public opinion had not been rendered effective and that meant tremendous organization which they lacked. He saw no use in forcing the pace and advised the workers to learn Hindi in three months, also Sanskrit and engage themselves in work of some kind which should in the long run make the institution thoroughly self-supporting. Mahatmaji opined that if subscriptions were solicited from outside Kerala and Travancore, it should have a demoralizing effect and mentioned that in Champaran he had offers of money from all sources but did not accept them except from a private friend, that at the time of the labour strike in Ahmedabad he rejected offers of thousands of rupees from a single individual. In the Kheda campaign he accepted some-

[1] Sudhanva, son of King Hansadhwaja of Champavati, was thrown into boiling oil for not reporting himself at the appointed place for fighting the invaders in response to the royal proclamation. But he came out unscathed because of his *bhakti*.

[2] What follows is from *The Hindu*, 14-3-1925.

thing from personal friends and not even half of what was given had been spent. From South Africa he brought back three to four lakhs of rupees. He could not recall a single battle he had fought where there was a debit balance and the amounts in every case were obtained with the minimum amount of trouble and fuss.

Young India, 19-3-1925 and *The Hindu*, 14-3-1925

160. NATIONAL EDUCATION

An Assistant Principal in a national institution writes:

> In order to save the young generation from the slave mentality created in the Government schools, the national education movement was started on a large scale in the first decade of this century. It only aimed at establishing schools where education was imparted "on national lines and under national control." . . . It undoubtedly produced a band of workers many of whom have taken a vigorous part in the struggle for freedom. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that as a purely educational movement, it had neither a separate source nor a separate existence . . . .
>
> The non-co-operation movement gave a second impetus—indeed a tremendous one—to the cause of national education. Hundreds of mushroom schools sprang into existence all over the country. Their object was also limited in scope. They mainly aimed at accommodating the N.C.O. students for one year only. The boys were to be made "Swaraj Soldiers", i.e., workers to carry out the different items of N.C.O. Here again the educational movement had no existence separate from the political one. When the latter lost its force, the former became feeble and infirm.
>
> The result is that national education has always been given a secondary or subordinate place in the programme and no scientific and independent thought has ever been accorded to it by any leader. It seems that with you it is not as dear as khaddar, or it may be that with you khaddar and national education mean one and the same thing! The Swarajists are enamoured only of the Councils. Taking these facts into consideration is it possible for the movement to make any progress? And if it meets with failure now and again, will it not produce a lamentable and discouraging effect upon the majority of the people? . . .
>
> The aim of education is to develop the physical and mental organs of children so as to make them worthy citizens of their country. This can only be done when boys are in the secondary schools. Before that they are too young and after that their character will have taken already a particular bent difficult to be turned to any other desirable direction. Now according to your opinion, the age in secondary schools is to be devoted mainly to hand-spinning, hand-weaving and everything connected

with it. Is not that education unnatural and oppressive where students of varied capabilities and different aptitudes are cramped together in one and the same mould? . . . .

Hand-spinning and hand-weaving may become one item of the curriculum, but it cannot and must not become the whole. Is it not better to lay down some broad fundamental and definite principles of national education and give every institution discretion to act according to its requirements, capabilities and the calibre of the students? . . . .

During the last forty years or more, a number of experiments were tried in the field of national education. Can you point out at least one institution, the model of which we can proudly ask the Government to imitate?

The whole world is advancing in material civilization, without which we shall certainly be handicapped. It is now a settled fact that India fell a prey to western nations because she was wanting in scientific and material progress. History has taught this lesson and it cannot be overlooked. But you never seem to give much importance to subjects like physics and chemistry. Is this not strange?

I do not know the conditions of 1906 but I do know those of 1921. National education to be truly national must reflect the national condition for the time being. And as the national condition at present is one of uncertainty national education too must remain in a more or less uncertain condition. How do children fare in a besieged place? Do they not according to their capacity take part in repelling the attack of the besiegers and suit themselves to the changing circumstances? Is that not their true education? Is not education the art of drawing out full manhood of the children under training? The greatest drawback of the present system of education is that it does not bear the stamp of reality, that the children do not react to the varying wants of the country. True education must correspond to the surrounding circumstances or it is not a healthy growth. The necessity of this response was the object of non-co-operation in education. True, we have not acted up to the ideal. That is because of our limitations, because we are unable to shake off the hypnotic effect of our surroundings.

But this is not to say that our educational institutions must become mere spinning and weaving institutes. I do regard spinning and weaving as the necessary part of any national system of education. I do not aim at taking the whole of the childrens' time for this purpose. Like a skilled physician I tend and concentrate my attention on the diseased limb knowing that that is the best way of looking after the others. I would develop in the child

his hands, his brain and his soul. The hands have almost atrophied. The soul has been altogether ignored. I therefore put in a plea in season and out of season for correcting these grave defects in our education. Is half an hour's spinning every day by our children too great a strain upon them? Will it result in mental paralysis?

I value education in the different sciences. Our children cannot have too much of chemistry and physics. And if these have not been attended to in the institutions in which I am directly supposed to be interested, it is because we have not the professors for the purpose and also because practical training in these sciences requires very expensive laboratories for which in the present state of uncertainty and infancy we are not ready.

Young India, 12-3-1925

161. SOUTH AFRICA

Things are clearly going from bad to worse in South Africa and there is no telling where they will end. In two separate measures, which have been put forward by the Government in power, "Asiatics" are discriminated against and classed with "Native", as contrasted with the "Coloured", people. It is somewhat difficult for those who have never been to South Africa to understand clearly what such discrimination means. What has to be realized is that the great bulk of the "Native" population is entirely uneducated. On the other hand, the "Coloured" people (i.e., those who have a slight mixture of European blood in their veins) are on the whole a fairly literate community. It appears that the policy of the new Government, under General Hertzog is to depress still further the "Asiatic" and to raise the status of the "Coloured" people.

A further measure is scheduled, whereby South African citizenship will be confined to the pure white population, which has been born and bred in South Africa. An Englishman coming out straight from England will not have his citizenship in South Africa as an inherent right on account of his English birth and origin. He will have to take out naturalization papers in South Africa. Leading newspapers in South Africa suggest that a compact has been made between the Labour Party (which relies chiefly on the British labour vote) and the Nationalist Party (which relies chiefly on the Dutch vote) on the understanding that the Nationalist will support a strong anti-Asiatic labour policy provided that the labourites will support a strong "burgher" policy.

In addition to this, we have the further news that a new segregation measure, of even more drastic character than the late "Class

Areas Bill", is already being prepared. It will be remembered that the Municipal Franchise Act for Natal, depriving Indians in future of municipal franchise, has now been passed and sanctioned by the Governor-General. If a racial Segregation Act is also passed, it will be difficult to see what will still remain of the "vested rights", which were to be strictly observed under the Smuts-Gandhi Agreement of 1914.

In the Transvaal, a picketing system and a boycott of all Indian trade has again been started. This time, in the present inflamed atmosphere—it has met with some measure of success. The repatriation of Indians in Natal by means of Government "recruiters" is still proceeding. I have personally cross-examined those in Madras who have returned. They have told me that they have been unable to find employment in India. They are therefore now to be found, after great misery and privation, entering the emigration depot for Malaya, asking to be sent out of India to the rubber plantations of the Federated Malaya States. Truly the whole situation of Indians in South Africa has reached the lowest point where even stout hearts may find it difficult to look forward to the future with hope. There is one redeeming feature, however, which continually meets us in every fresh information that reaches us in India. The Hindu-Muslim problem out there does not exist. In face of common suffering Indians are one people —one in heart and soul as well as one in Indian birth.[1]

In view of the foregoing gloomy study of the situation in South Africa, the remarks of General Smuts quoted last week[2] in these columns derive an added interest. The picketing referred to by Mr. Andrews is nothing but veiled coercion. If with all the elaborate precautions it did not remain peaceful everywhere in India in 1921, how less likely it is to be peaceful in South Africa, only those who know its white population can realize.

Young India, 12-3-1925

[1] The foregoing article was contributed by C. F. Andrews.
[2] *Vide* "Notes-I", 5-3-1925, sub-title, "The Bar Sinister".

162. SWADESHI AND NATIONALISM

The following from a friend has been on my file for a long time:

No doubt you have read M. Romain Rolland's book entitled *Mahatma Gandhi*. On page 176[1] of this book appears this paragraph: "What is this but the triumph of nationalism—the narrowest and most unpolluted? Stay at home, shut all doors, change nothing, hold on to evrything. Export nothing, buy nothing, uplift and purify body and spirit! A gospel indeed of medieval monks! *And Gandhi of the broad mind, lets his name be associated with it*! (By way of preface to D. B. Kalelkar's[2] *Gospel of Swadeshi.*) Coming from an ardent admirer of yours, this indeed calls for an answer from you. I notice in the November 27 issue of *Young India*, you append a note at the foot of Mr. Andrews' article entitled "Truth about Nationalism", which purports to state that Indian swadeshi cannot become impure or racial. Will you not stretch the argument further in a subsequent issue and allay the fears of the author of this wonderful book and its innumerable readers?

So far as D. B. Kalelkar's pamphlet is concerned, the position is this. It is a rendering of a Gujarati pamphlet. My preface was to the original. D. B. Kalelkar is a valued associate. I therefore wrote the half dozen lines of preface also in Gujarati without studying the pamphlet. I had only glanced at passages here and there. I knew my friend's views on swadeshi. I had no difficulty about identifying myself with them. But at the instance of Mr. Andrews, I have read the translation and I confess that the presentment is narrow in places. I have discussed them with Mr. Kalelkar too and he agrees that they do read narrow in the translation for which he is not responsible. So far as my own views are concerned, my writings in *Young India* make it quite plain that my swadeshi, and for that matter Mr. Kalelkar's, is not as narrow as the pamphlet would lead one to suppose.

So much for the pamphlet itself.

My definition of swadeshi is well known. I must not serve distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest. It is never vindictive or punitive. It is in no sense narrow, for I buy from every part of the world what is needed for my growth. I refuse to buy from anybody anything however nice or beautiful if it interferes

[1] Page 115 in the sixth impression published by Messrs George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

[2] b. 1885; Educationist, writer and constructive worker; Padma Vibhushan

with my growth or injures those whom Nature has made my first care. I buy useful healthy literature from every part of the world. I buy surgical instruments from England, pins and pencils from Austria and watches from Switzerland. But I will not buy an inch of the finest cotton fabric from England or Japan or any other part of the world because it has injured and increasingly injures the millions of the inhabitants of India. I hold it to be sinful for me [not] to buy the cloth spun and woven by the needy millions of India's paupers and to buy foreign cloth, although it may be superior in quality to the Indian hand-spun. My swadeshi therefore chiefly centres round the hand-spun khaddar and extends to every thing that can be and is produced in India. My nationalism is as broad as my swadeshi. I want India's rise so that the whole world may benefit. I do not want India to rise on the ruin of other nations. If therefore India was strong and able, India would send out to the world her treasures of art and health-giving spices, but will refuse to send out opium or intoxicating liquors although the traffic may bring much material benefit to India.

Young India, 12-3-1925

163. BIRTH-CONTROL

It is not without the greatest hesitation and reluctance that I approach the subject. The question of using artificial methods for birth-control has been referred to me by correspondents ever since my return to India. Though I have answered them personally, I have never hitherto dealt with the subject publicly. My attention was drawn to the subject, now thirty-five years ago, when I was a student in England. There was then a hot controversy raging between a purist who would not countenance anything but natural means and a doctor who advocated artificial means. It was at that early time in my life that I became, after leanings for a brief period towards artificial means, a convinced opponent of them. I now observe that in some Hindi papers the methods are described in a revoltingly open manner which shocks one's sense of decency. I observe, too, that one writer does not hesitate to cite my name as among the supporters of artificial methods of birth-control. I cannot recall a single occasion when I spoke or wrote in favour of such methods. I have seen also two distinguished names having been used in support. I hesitate to publish them without reference to their owners.

There can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth-control. But the only method handed down from ages past is self-control or *brahmacharya*. It is an infallible sovereign remedy doing good to those who practise it. And medical men will earn the gratitude of mankind, if instead of devising artificial means of birth-control they will find out the means of self-control. The union is meant not for pleasure but for bringing forth progeny. And union is a crime when the desire for progeny is absent.

Artificial methods are like putting a premium upon vice. They make men and women reckless. And respectability that is being given to the methods must hasten the dissolution of the restraints that public opinion puts upon one. Adoption of artificial methods must result in imbecility and nervous prostration. The remedy will be found to be worse than the disease. It is wrong and immoral to seek to escape the consequences of one's acts. It is good for a person who overeats to have an ache and a fast. It is bad for him to indulge his appetite and then escape the consequence by taking tonics or other medicine. It is still worse for a person to indulge in his animal passions and escape the consequences of his acts. Nature is relentless and will have full revenge for any such violation of her laws. Moral results can only be produced by moral restraints. All other restraints defeat the very purpose for which they are intended. The reasoning underlying the use of artificial methods is that indulgence is a necessity of life. Nothing can be more fallacious. Let those who are eager to see the births regulated explore the lawful means devised by the ancients and try to find out how they can be revived. An enormous amount of spade-work lies in front of them. Early marriages are fruitful source of adding to the population. The present mode of life has also a great deal to do with the evil of unchecked procreation. If these causes are investigated and dealt with, society will be morally elevated. If they are ignored by impatient zealots and if artificial methods become the order of the day, nothing but moral degradation can be the result. A society that has already become enervated through a variety of causes will become still further enervated by the adoption of artificial methods. Those men therefore who are light-heartedly advocating artificial methods cannot do better than study the subject afresh, stay their injurious activity and popularize *brahmacharya* both for the married and the unmarried. That is the only noble and straight method of birth-contol.

Young India, 12-3-1925

164. NOTES

Latest Figures

Further figures reported since last week from Gujarat and through a telegram from Pandit Jawaharlal from Allahabad bring the total of membership to 7,851. The figure reported last week was 6,644. So far only five provinces show an advance on their position as it stood last week. The revised figures of these provinces are as follows:

		A	B	Total
1.	Gujarat	1847	80	1927
2.	U.P.	129	254	1094 (including unclassified figures)
3.	Bihar	418	146	737 (do)
4.	Maharashtra	48	123	171
5.	Sind	Details not furnished		168
6.	Burma	26	3	29

The last named Province is one of the six Provinces from whom no report has been received on the 1st of March. The other five, i.e., Tamilnad, Kerala, Delhi, Assam and North-Western Provinces still remain unrepresented in the grand total given above.

As had been foreshadowed in the previous report the larger number of provinces have not yet been able to cope with the task of collecting district figures. It is hoped that full classified figures will be communicated to *Young India* office next week. Messages should not reach us later than Wednesday morning.

Membership Returns

The figures, published last week, of membership leave a great deal to be desired. Six Provinces have not sent in any returns at all. Of those that have, many have not even taken the trouble of giving the classification. One had hoped, from the letter I published some weeks ago, that Berar will at least make a brave show at least in yarn-giving members. But I am sorry it stands at the bottom of the list. Ajmer could, if it wished, easily give one thousand self-spinners. It has begun with only two self-

spinners against fifteen yarn givers. I expect Bengal, Andhra, Karnatak and Bihar and Tamilnad which have well-equipped spinning centres, to beat Gujarat if only because they have a much larger population than Gujarat. They have moreover spinning traditions whose memory still lingers in the present generation.

The Rs. 1,000 Prize

I observe that several youngmen are making an earnest effort to win Mr. Revashanker's prize. Some of the essays promise to be brilliantly written. These competitors will be glad to learn that Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai has agreed to join the examining board. I am looking forward to worthy contributions to the growing literature on the subject.

Spinners' Yarn

A District Congress Secretary writes to say that some spinners have grown so fond of spinning that they are anxious to purchase their own yarn and get it woven into cloth for personal use. He asks whether those who have sent their yarn as Congress subscription may buy their own yarn for the purpose mentioned. The ideal is undoubtedly for people during the leisure hours to spin enough for their own clothing. It is the easiest and the best method of India becoming self-supporting for her cloth. I would therefore advise all secretaries to encourage the idea of spinners buying their own yarn on the understanding that they do not use it for paying the subscription again.

Some Striking Figures

A lover of khaddar has handed me the following condensation of figures to prove how easy it is to make India self-supporting for her cloth, if only the people could be induced to shake off their laziness and work the charkha and to wear khaddar garments:[1]

[1] Not reproduced here. The figures included were: For 312 million people of India, at 20 yards per head per annum, 6,240 million yards could be produced by 3 crores of charkhas and 35 lakhs of handlooms. About 200 crores of yards imported in 1922 could be produced by just one crore of charkhas and only 12 to 15 lakhs of handlooms.

No Stoning in Koran

I gladly publish the following telegram from Dr. Mahomed Ali, President, Ahmadiya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam:

> The Koran enjoins no such punishment as stoning for any offence whatever. Your note is unfair to Islam and her Prophet and liable to tremendously prejudice the world against Islam. I am sure this is not your considered opinion and is based on hearsay. A reference to my English translation of Koran on the points concerned will convince you that your informants are in error. Pray consider and refute.

Dr. Mahomed Ali has misunderstood my criticism. I knew that stoning to death had been defended by some as a penalty described by the Koran in certain circumstances. Without stating my opinion as to whether such a penalty had or had not been prescribed in the Koran or the traditions, I simply said that it could not be defended even on the authority of the Holy Koran. I am glad that Dr. Mahomed Ali assures me that "the Koran enjoins no such punishment as stoning". I would like to know on what ground it has been defended at Kabul and the defence upheld in India by a section of Mussalmans. I would like to see a unanimous condemnation by Mussalmans of stoning as a form of penalty. If it could be had it would make a repetition of the penalty impossible in any part of the Islamic world.

A Typical Letter

A well-known Indian public worker once wrote to a well-known Englishman a letter asking for an interview. Here is a characteristic reply sent by the Englishman:

> In reply to your letter I regret that I cannot see you for the simple reason that, in my opinion, no benefit could be derived by you from an interview with me in the present state of the Indian question. I can neither understand nor sympathize with the action and purpose of the leaders of the Indian community. Your people must surely understand something of the nature of the race of men with whom they are dealing. Much has been given you by the British Government. Can you not put to its full use that which has been given in the spirit of justice? It is possible for your people, by high organization of their voting power and by the careful selection and continual criticism of their best men, to prove over a series of years that they are capable of exercising the highest duties and fulfilling the most exacting responsibilities of citizenship. I am sure that in giving this proof of political capacity you would carry with you for future political evolution, the best minds and the most effective sym-

pathies of my countrymen. If you place your trust in political bargains among English parties, you can but be disappointed by results.

It is difficult to choose whether to deplore the insolence of the letter or to admire the sincerity of the writer's convictions. He had made up his mind that he had nothing to learn from the would-be visitor. He had only to give. Who can satisfy this Englishman who keeps himself locked up in a safe and refuses to see that no amount of argumentative powers can possibly fit us for the "exacting responsibility of citizenship"? Who can prove to such an Englishman that the responsibilities of citizenship require the primary capacity for self-defence and that this cannot be acquired by learning the art of debating? Who can show to him that his own race learnt the art of self-government by developing the capacity for defending its country and that such debating power as it has learnt came to it only after the English people began to have self-government? Who can show to this writer and his like that we Indians think not that much has been given us in the spirit of justice, but that so little has been given to us, and that too by force of circumstances? Lastly, who can show him that we put our trust not in "political bargaining among English parties but in our own strength?" This ignorance of Englishmen and their attitude of studied isolation is truly deplorable. The letter, however, teaches us a lesson. We must not court insult by asking for interviews with those we do not know. Our own conduct will right our relations with the whole world.

A Worker Imprisoned

I have a telegram from Cochin saying that Sjt. Kurur Nambudiripad has been sentenced to two months' simple imprisonment. I do not know the cause of imprisonment. Sjt. Nambudiripad is a seasoned soldier and staunch worker. I congratulate him on his imprisonment. In my opinion he also serves who is imprisoned in the act of service and without any moral lapse.

A Politician?

Mr. Andrews sends me for answer a letter he has received from an English friend. This is the friend's puzzle:

I was surprised to read in a recent article Gandhi's repudiation of intermarriage between touchables and untouchables. That seems to me the test question. Not that I would have him advocate marriage between any particular caste and any other, any more than between any person and any other person. But surely the right marital relations, and the right children, are found whenever man and wife are of one mind, in the

> fullest sense. And is that not Gandhi's aim in India? In proportion as it is reached, will not intermarriage between castes not become as natural as in Ephesus was intermarriage between Jew and Greek?
>
> I know Gandhi is a politician and I can guess he wrote the words to avoid offence. But surely the *political* price of such a statement is sure to be fatally injurious to his central aim? How can he expect the European farmer in Kenya to treat the Indian shopkeeper as he should, if Brahmins are to deny equal privileges to sweepers *on the sole ground of caste*?

I have repeatedly expressed my view of caste and intermarriage. With me marriage is no necessary test of friendship even between husband and wife, let alone their respective clans. I cannot picture to myself a time when all mankind will have one religion. As a rule there will, therefore, be the religious bar. People will marry in their own religion. Similarly there will persist the territorial restriction. The caste restriction is an extension of the same principle. It is a social convenience. An English nobleman's son does not, as a rule, marry a grocer's daughter. She would, as a rule, be rejected on the sole ground of her birth. I am opposed to untouchability because it limits the field of service. Marriage is not an act of service. It is a comfort man or woman seeks for him or herself. And I see no harm in restricting the circle of comfort or being selective in regard to such a life-change as marriage. If a Kenya settler will not tolerate my presence in Kenya because I will not give my daughter in marriage to him or receive his for my son I should be sorry for him but would content myself with exclusion from Kenya rather than be compelled to contract an incompatible tie. I would only add that the Kenya settler would not permit me even to think of any such relation. And if I put forth any such claim it would be regarded as an additional reason for excluding me from his preserve. Though the point is absolutely clear as it seems to me and though marriage is restricted in practice all over the world to classes, clans, etc., Mr. Andrews' correspondent is not likely to be satisfied with my answer. But I can give him the assurance that I have not evaded the issue for fear of giving offence. I am not a politician in the narrow sense given to the word by the correspondent. I have written as I have believed. I have sacrificed no principle to gain a political advantage. Probably I would gain greater reputation in the circles I move in, if I did not accept the Hindu restraint on intermarriage. And what is my central aim? It is equal treatment for the whole of humanity and that equal treatment means equality of service. The duty of service may be denied to none. The privilege of

marriage presupposes temperamental and other affinity. It would be no crime for a woman to reject the hand of a red-haired man but she would be guilty of a gross sin if she neglected the duty of serving him because of his red hair. Marriage is a matter of choice. Service is an obligation that cannot be shirked.

To Another Revolutionary

I am afraid your advice to me to retire from public life is not so easy to follow as it is to give. I claim to be servant of India and therethrough of humanity. I cannot always have it my own way. If I have had my share of fair weather I must face the foul too. I must not abandon the field of battle so long as I feel that I am wanted. When my work is done and I have become a disabled or worn-out soldier, I shall be put away. Till then I must continue to do my work and endeavour to neutralize in all the ways accessible to me the poison of the revolutionary activity. A well-meaning and self-sacrificing physician who prescribes arsenic when he should have given fresh grape juice is one to be shunned in spite of his good intentions and even sacrifice. I invite the revolutionaries not to commit suicide and drag with them unwilling victims. India's way is not Europe's. India is not Calcutta and Bombay. India lives in her seven hundred thousand villages. If the revolutionaries are as many let them spread out into these villages and try to bring sunshine into the dark dungeons of the millions of their countrymen. That would be worthier of their ambition and love of the land than the exciting and unquenchable thirst for the blood of English officials and those who are assisting them. It is nobler to try to change their spirit than to take their lives.

Hindu Aggression

A Mussalman correspondent takes me gently to task for my article dealing with the alleged building of mosques on private property, and then quotes unsupported instances of alleged Hindu aggression. He, however, supports one statement with facts. I have invited him to support his other statements and have promised full publication and even investigation in the event of his so supporting them. Meanwhile, I give below the only statement made and supported by my correspondent:

> The Moslems of Lohani want to substitute a pucka structure for an old cutcha mosque. The Hindu might won't let the Moslem right prevail. Our brethren are using the same weapons of boycott against the rightful countrymen which they were taught to use against foreign aggression. Prayers and call to prayers are all stopped.

If the Hindus of Lohani have done what is imputed to them, they are certainly guilty of aggression. I invite them to send me their version for publication and set the matter right without delay, if the allegations made against them are right. Those who seek justice must come with clean hands.

Young India, 12-3-1925

165. THE LOWLANDS OF KENYA[1]

After a recent visit to Delhi, I feel it to be of the utmost importance to make plain, beyond any shadow of misunderstanding, how emphatically I should object to anyone being sent out from India officially to investigate an area in the Lowlands of Kenya in which large free grants of Crown lands should be given to Indians for colonization purposes.

In the first place, to accept even tentatively such an offer, or even to examine it with a view to approval, is to stultify the whole Indian position. For the Indian claim is not to receive free grants of Crown lands anywhere, but to recover the legal rights of sale and purchase of land in the Highlands which have been illegally taken away after a solemn promise had been made that they should remain intact. Indians are asking for an elementary right of citizenship. They are asking to be placed on a basis of equality with other citizens in the eyes of the law. It, therefore, can easily be seen, that if Indians even examine the proposal that they should be given grants in the Lowlands, it will be certainly understood as their final abandonment of legal rights elsewhere. I do not think that it can be made too plain, that the very *act* of sending an Indian official to examine an area in the Lowlands will be interpreted as a giving up of Indian legal rights in the Highlands altogether.

In the second place, for Indians to use the British military force to take possession of a large area in the Lowlands, thus depriving the natives of still further territory, in addition to the 12,000 square miles of fertile soil that has been taken from them in the Highlands by the whites, is to commit an injustice. It means that India, for the first time, by a definite act is prepared to enter upon a policy of imperial "grab", wherever an opportunity occurs. That the African Natives, as far as they have any voice or power, will most strongly object to any such policy of "grab", on the part of India, goes without saying. If they are voiceless and powerless, then the wrong done to them will be all the greater. It must be remembered that Kenya is not an empty country, with no Native inhabitants. It is a large territory, with only a very small fraction of good, well-watered

[1] This was C.F. Andrews' article to which Gandhiji appended a note.

agricultural land. If it had not been for the labour exploitation that has been going on, with its inevitable demoralization, the Native population would already have spread over the cultivable soil and occupied it. Even today, in spite of the exploitation that has taken place, the Native "reserves" are already proving too small. It would be an act of grave injustice, therefore, if Indians were to seize, under the cover of British and Indian bayonets, a great slice of the territory still remaining open for Native occupation.

In the third place, the Indian claim to free immigration into Kenya and Uganda is based entirely on the ground that Indians are helping and not hindering the Native advancement. There is no other claim than this. What is put forward is this, that for two thousand years the trade between East Africa and India has gone on. Indians have come freely to East Africa and have been hospitably received because they came in peace and not for war; because the trade and the barter that they brought with them was mutually beneficial. East Africans have, from this side, been able to come freely to India in the same manner. They have been hospitably received for the same reason. Thus free emigration on both sides has been encouraged and has prevailed. But if an entirely new relationship is advocated—the relationship (however decently veiled) of conquest and possession,—the whole aspect changes. The Indian claim, to respect the Native and to benefit the Native, falls to the ground. Indians become imperialistic invaders of Africa and are classed as such in the same category with the Europeans. Though feeling the iron yoke of subjection themselves, they are ready to bring others into subjection. They do not any longer stand out on the side of the oppressed, but themselves take the side of the oppressors and their own share of the spoils. Any such action on the part of responsible Indians, on such a large scale as is now contemplated, is to me unthinkable.

I entirely endorse Mr. Andrews' view that it would be wrong in every way to countenance the idea of Indians being excluded from the highlands and restricted to the lowlands especially if it is true that the lowlands have to be stolen from the native of the soil.

Young India, 12-3-1925

166. TO M.V.N.

I draw a sharp distinction between untouchability and *varna* or caste. The former has no scientific basis. It cannot be supported by reason. It denies man the privilege of service to fellow-beings and deprives the "untouchables" in distress of the right of receiving service from their kind. The caste system has in my opinion a scientific basis. Reason does not revolt against it. If it has disadvantages, it has also its advantages. It does not prevent a Brahmin from serving his Sudra brother. Caste creates a social and moral restraint. The doctrine of caste cannot be extended. I would restrict it to four divisions. Any multiplication would be an evil. I would reform the castes and rid them of undoubted abuses but I can find no reason for their abolition. For me there is no question of superiority or inferiority. A Brahmin who regards himself as a superior being born to look down upon the other castes is not a Brahmin. If he is first he is so by right of service.

Young India, 12-3-1925

167. TO R. S. S. R.

You have not given your address. If, in your opinion, the *Gita* advocates violence in the other chapters, the verses you quote from the 12th do not take us much further along non-violence. But I do not agree with you that the *Gita* advocates and teaches violence in any part of it. See the concluding discourse at the end of Chapter II. Although that chapter lends itself to a violent interpretation, the concluding verses seem to me to preclude any such interpretation. The fact is that a literal interpretation of the *Gita* lands one in a sea of contradictions. The letter truly killeth, the spirit giveth life.

Young India, 12-3-1925

168. TELEGRAM

March 12, 1925

REGRET IMPOSSIBILITY GETTING DAY IN PRESENT PROGRAMME TO MEET EX-HIGHNESS[1].

The Hindu, 14-3-1925

169. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, QUILON

March 12, 1925

MR. PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL AND FRIENDS,

I thank you sincerely for the beautiful address that you have given to me and the sentiments that you have expressed therein. I know that you regret, as I regret, the absence of my friend Maulana Shaukat Ali, who as a rule accompanied me in all such tours. As it so happened, it was not possible for him to tear himself away from the special engagements that have kept him in Delhi, nor was it really necessary for him to accompany me during this tour. As you are aware, I have for the time being a special mission in Travancore in which he is not so interested as we Hindus are.

The question of untouchability expresses itself in all its evil form in Malabar. I must confess to you that before the struggle started in Vykom, I never knew that approachability was a crime. Travancore is one of the few favoured places in India where education seems to be almost universal. You are in a State which is considered—and I think rightly considered—to be progressive. This State, I know, has done a great deal for what are miscalled the depressed classes. I say the depressed classes miscalled, because the proper term is suppressed classes. It was Swami Vivekananda[2] who reminded us that the upper classes had suppressed a portion of themselves, and had thereby been depressed themselves. You cannot lower the members of your own species without lowering yourselves. It surpasses comprehension that any human being should be prohibited from making

[1] Sir Sri Rama Varma, ex-Maharaja of Cochin. Gandhiji met him at his palace on March 18.

[2] 1863-1902; disciple of Ramakrishna Paramhamsa; exponent of Vedantic philosophy; founder of Ramakrishna Math

use of roads which are semi-public or altogether public. Ever since I have entered Travancore, I have been patiently and courteously listening to the arguments that can possibly be advanced in favour of such a prohibition but I must confess to you that I remain totally unconvinced, not because I am not open to conviction, but because there seems to me to be something inherently wrong in the very opposition that is taken up by the orthodox people.

I have made to them three definite offers. I will not discuss them at the present moment, but I ask you all who are assembled here to give me and give the cause your sympathy and co-operation in an active manner. (Cheers.) And that co-operation and sympathy I ask of every man and woman in this city if you are convinced with me of the error that has crept into Hinduism. Pray remember that all the religions of the world are at present in the melting pot. They may not support themselves upon mere scriptural authority. They will have to stand the severest test of reason and, *sanatana dharma* Hindu that I claim myself to be, I do not hesitate to repeat what I have said on many an occasion that if I find that there were any texts in the Vedas or Purānas that were inconsistent with reason, I would have no hesitation in rejecting them, but all the researches that the limited time and the limited knowledge have enabled me to make personally and all the assistance that I have received from the most learned Shastris that are to be found in India have convinced me that there is absolutely no warrant for unapproachability or even untouchability as they are being practised today in India in our Shastras. This is a land of learning and if you desire to controvert the statement that I have made I invite you to give me your assistance and give me the verses that in your opinion may support the contention of the orthodox. I assure you that if we do not wake betimes—I am speaking to the Hindu part of this audience—our religion is in danger of perishing.

I am asked to be patient in connection with this reform. I know from experience that patience is a virtue. I have in my own humble manner cultivated that virtue for the past 40 years with the greatest deliberation, but I must confess to you that I can no longer remain patient with the curse that blots Hinduism. I ask you to regard impatience with this curse a virtue. Mark my words, I do not say impatience with the orthodox people, but I ask you to be impatient with yourselves. Do not rest satisfied till you have rid the land of this curse and you will tear down the opposition of blind orthodoxy if you bestir yourself and

express your own opinion with emphasis, and satyagraha is nothing but an emphatic expression of one's own opinion. Emphasis is not required in the speech, it is required in the action and emphasis of action means suffering in one's own person. I ask you in the light of this test critically to study the movement that is going on at Vykom and if you find in the satyagrahis there the slightest trace of violence, denounce them in unmeasured terms, but if you find that they are a set of honest people acting in defiance of the opinion of the orthodoxy of Vykom, but patiently enduring what becomes their lot, if you find that what I am telling you about these men is true, I ask you to support them.

Satyagraha is a force that has come to stay. No force in the world can kill it. It is a priceless possession. It blesses those who practise it and it blesses those in connection with whom it is practised. No one need fear it, and I wish that you, the educated people of this place, will study the method of satyagraha with all its implications and you will admit with me that it is a method which is matchless, if it is properly understood and practised.

I was delighted to see in the address of the Dewan of Travancore a reference to the spinning-wheel. You have passed in the Assembly a resolution recommending the adoption of the spinning-wheel in the national schools. I congratulate the Assembly upon the resolution, but as I passed through the towns or the cities of Travancore, I must confess to you that I have my misgivings about the success of the introduction of the spinning-wheel in your schools. If I remember rightly, the Dewan has advertised for an expert spinner. I wonder whether it will be possible to get a single expert spinner in Travancore and if you have not sufficient expert spinners, I do not see how it will be possible for you to man your schools with spinning teachers, but having passed the resolution, I ask you to make of that resolution a success. Believe me, the spinning-wheel and the spinning-wheel alone will solve, if anything will solve, the problem of the deepening poverty of India. You want a universal supplementary occupation for the agricultural classes of India. Such an occupation has to be supplemented only by the spinning-wheel, nor is it a new thing. Only a hundred years ago every cottage of India had a spinning-wheel. Restore the spinning-wheel to its place and you will solve the problem of poverty.

I have fallen in love with the women of Travancore. They do not need the inordinate lengths that the women of the Tamil land require. I am glad that the women of Travancore consi-

der themselves sufficiently elegant if their limbs and bodies are covered. Their white dress has captivated me. I hope and believe that it is a symbol and emblem of the purity within, (Cheers.) but I am distressed to find that they wear the calico of Manchester or even the calico of Ahmedabad. I ask them to copy their sisters of Assam. Every woman in Assam knows how to weave, and almost every household in Assam even at the present moment has a handloom. I ask every one of you, man and woman, to clothe yourselves in khaddar, hand-spun and hand-woven. You will thereby place yourselves in direct touch with the poorest of the land and if you will kindly adopt the advice that I have humbly ventured to tender to you, you will find that this will be a land of plenty.

The Hindu, 14-3-1925

170. SPEECH IN REPLY TO "EZHAVAS'" ADDRESS, VARKALAI[1]

March 13, 1925

I am deeply grateful to you for the address that you have kindly presented to me. Needless to say, I was looking forward to this visit. I wanted to know who were the different communities that were barred entrance to roads that are public or semi-public in Vykom and it has, therefore, been a matter of study, to come here and make your acquaintance personally. I have now a demonstration of what is in store for His Holiness, if he went to Vykom and tried to cross the barrier.

As you are aware, I was to have waited upon Her Highness the Maharani Regent, and similarly, I was to have waited upon His Holiness (Swami Narayana Guru), both of which I did yesterday, and feel highly flattered that I was able to wait upon these high personages. I am able to tell you that Her Highness's sympathies, so far as she herself is personally concerned, are entirely with those who are trying to seek redress. I am free to tell you that she considers that the roads at Vykom and similar roads elsewhere should be open to all classes, (Cheers.) but as the head of the State, she feels powerless, unless there is public opinion behind her, and unless, therefore, public opinion in Travancore is organized in a perfectly legitimate, peaceful and

[1] The address was presented at Sivagiri Hall at a large gathering of *Ezhavas* and other untouchables.

constitutional manner, and unless that opinion is expressed in an equally constitutional, legitimate and peaceful manner, though ever so emphatic, she will feel powerless to grant the relief desired. I, for my part, entirely accept that position. It is for you and me to break down the opposition of blind orthodoxy. You will not feel the glow of freedom and liberty, unless you yourselves take a leading part in breaking down that opposition.

The orthodox friends whom I saw flung in my face, and rightly, the law of karma. The paraphrase that I would give of the law of karma is that everyone gets what he deserves, and we deserve what we have inherited. Hinduism believes in heredity, and so do the scientists, and Hinduism is a science reduced to practice, but that very science, that very Hinduism also teaches us to undo the law of karma and that undoing is done by doing more karma of an opposite character. If, in my past incarnation, I did something that was wrong, it is possible for me to undo the result of that evil past by doing something which is contrary to the evil, and even as it is possible for us to do better than our past, it is possible for this blindly orthodox people now to heap bad karma upon bad karma, and earn a reward which they would not like. The law of karma is no respector of persons, but I would ask you to leave the orthodoxy to itself. Man is the maker of his own destiny, and I therefore ask you to become makers of your own destiny. I am myself trying to become a bridge between my blind orthodoxy and those who are victims of that orthodoxy, and, therefore, in so far as it is possible for me, I am trying to become one of yourselves, and then, as I was telling His Holiness this morning, I described myself as a scavenger—*Bhangi*—and *Bhangi* occupies the lowest rung of the ladder among suppressed classes. I am not ashamed to call myself a *Bhangi*, and I ask every *Bhangi* not to be ashamed of his calling. A *Bhangi*, if he is true to his salt, is a sanitarian. I described myself also as a weaver, spinner and farmer. The suppressed classes, the orthodox say, should remain suppressed because of the vices which, they say, are inherent in them. It is for you and me to show that no vice is inherent in man. That which is inherent in man is his virtue. Immediately he realizes his own potentialities, man becomes almost divine, and I would like every one of us to become what he should be, and not remain what we are.

It gives me pleasure to find amongst you so many educated men and women; to find lawyers, doctors and other professional men. But I must confess to you that I am not satisfied with that. It is good, but it is not good enough. What will tell in the end

will be character and not a knowledge of letters. I would, therefore, ask you to cultivate the best in yourselves, and you will find that no strength, however invincible it may appear to be, can stand against the inherent strength you would have developed in yourselves. There are instances innumerable throughout the length and breadth of India, of people belonging to suppressed classes, having not only come into their own, but of having commanded reverence from the highest among Brahmins, and I want you to do nothing less than those distinguished men have done before you. I ask you to regard yourselves as trustees for the welfare of Hinduism. I know that there is at the present moment a wave of impatience going round the country, not only through Travancore, but throughout the length and breadth of India, amongst the suppressed classes. I assure you that it is wrong. You cannot achieve durable reform by becoming impatient. If we must be impatient, we must be impatient with ourselves, and not impatient with the wrongdoer. I have presented India with the same prescription in connection with the conduct of Englishmen towards us, and I have no other in connection with the conduct of orthodoxy towards us. And if every vice that is attributed to us is eradicated, you will find that orthodoxy has absolutely no bottom left to itself. You will say, and very properly, what can virtue and character have to do with entrance to a public road, but I want you to look beneath the surface. There is, in the mind of orthodoxy, religion mixed up inextricably with the use of certain public roads.

The position that is taken up by orthodoxy is wrong, unsound, immoral and sinful, but that is my viewpoint, that is your viewpoint, not that of orthodoxy. There was a time when our ancestors offered human sacrifice. We know that it was diabolical, that it was irreligion, but not so thought our ancestors. They knew no better and they had made of vice a virtue. And we would be doing them grave injustice if we do judge them by the standard of today. If we are to judge them rightly, it is necessary for us to step into their shoes and see how they would have felt, and they did feel when human sacrifice was abolished. This is not in justification for the past deeds, but it is a circumstance which is in favour of our ancestors, that they knew no better, and so would I have you to judge the blindly orthodox people of our own times. They know no better, and I tell you, I am speaking from bitter experience. I am speaking, that is to say, of experience in my own domestic life. I have not yet been able to remove the wall of prejudice that surrounds my own dear wife and I refuse to

be impatient with her. I must carry her with me by showing to her the greatest consideration, the greatest courtesy and greater affection still, if it were possible for me to do so. While I remain absolutely strict with reference to my own conduct, while I must become impatient of any wrong, the slightest that may be lurking in me, I must be generous towards her. You will not expect me to do otherwise. Then similarly I expect you not to feel otherwise towards the orthodox people, and that is the secret of a true religious life. Swamiji told me yesterday, religion was one. I combated that view, and I combat it here this morning. So long as there are different human heads, so long will there be different religions, but the secret of a true religious life is to tolerate one another's religion. What may appear evil to us in certain religious practices is not necessarily evil to those who follow those practices. I cannot, I dare not, blind myself to existing differences. I cannot rub them off the slate, if I would, but knowing those differences, I must love even those who differ from me. You will find an exemplification of this law throughout the world. No two leaves of this very tree, under whose shadow we are sitting, are alike, though they spring from the same root, but, even as the leaves live together in perfect harmony and present to us a beautiful whole, so must we, divided humanity present to the outsider looking upon us a beautiful whole. That can be done when we begin to love each other and tolerate each other in spite of differences. So, although I see the deep ignorance, the black ignorance of blind orthodoxy, I refuse to be impatient with that orthodoxy, and hence I present to the world the law of non-violence and I say that a man who wants to lead a religious life on this earth and a man who wants to realize himself on this earth in this incarnation must remain non-violent in every shape and form and in every one of his actions. And I am here to tell you that, had this Vykom satyagraha been carried on in that absolutely non-violent spirit and had that campaign received that support from you which it should have received, the battle would have closed long ago. I have given my meed of praise to the satyagrahis of Vykom. They have done well. They have commanded my admiration, but that was only one side of the picture. I would be untrue to you if I did not present to you the other side of the picture but there again, applying the same law of non-violence, I refuse to condemn them. They have done their best, but I ask them and I ask you to do better. They have done no physical violence to anybody, but their thoughts and their minds were not non-violent. I discovered that even during my

discussion with them. They feel bitter towards the orthodox people who are putting up this opposition. They are angry with them and they distrust their motives. They distrust the motives of the Government. I say that all these things are beneath the dignity of satyagraha. I will take the Government at its word. I believe the orthodox when they say that it does violence to their religious sentiment when I pass through their road and, by giving them the same credit for honesty which I would claim for myself, I disarm their suspicion and opposition. I place myself in a most favourable position by insinuating myself in their esteem and thereby expect to open the eyes of their understanding. I want you to take up that attitude mentally, because I believe that thoughts are infinitely more powerful than deeds. Deeds are indifferent caricatures of our thoughts, and a student of psychology has no difficulty in analysing the deeds and tracing them to their sources, and finding out how noble and manly a man is and often times how equally degraded he is.

My object today is to reiterate the main principles, that we must attain our own salvation, we must be self-reliant, we must exert ourselves and I ask you to set aside every other task that may be before you and apply yourselves to the finishing of this particular satyagraha. It is a test case and the way for you to do it is to feed this noble band of satyagrahis and to feed them in every sense of this term. You must be ashamed of receiving money from me or from any other person outside this province, if it were possible even outside Vykom. You must not only find this physical food for them but you must also dedicate yourselves to the cause, and never allow the ceaseless flow of satyagrahis to dry up. You must not be satisfied with a few young men, brave lads, day in and day out sitting in and spinning away in that fierce sun before the barricades, but you must take your due share in the cause, you must also perform *tapascharya* by being baked in the sun, and what is more, since sacrifice is a sacred thing, you must approach this task with a sacred heart. Your character must therefore be above suspicion and you must be truthful and self-controlled. You must not indulge in luxuries for the time being at any rate, you must cut your necessaries down to the lowest point, you must cut yourselves off from every worldly tie for the time being; having taken leave of your elders, you must not turn your back towards them. They may not expect you to help them even in time of their need, once you have gone from them. Try to do this in reality and you will find for yourselves that you have carved a status which no power on earth can deprive you of; all

cannot have the privilege of doing this special work, but all of you can do social amelioration work among the community. There is the drink evil, you must tackle that evil. I do not sufficiently know the other evil habits that may be prevalent in your community. But you must remove untouchability from amongst yourselves. You must go out to those among the suppressed classes who are still lower down in the scale, befriend them and help them in every manner possible.

Take up the gospel of spinning and khaddar. I have urged His Holiness to take up this thing in right earnest and ask everyone of you to take to spinning and weaving and wear the product of your own labour. I understand that not very long ago everyone of you or at least every woman in your community was a beautiful spinner. Thousands upon thousands knew how to weave. Both are noble callings. In spinning alone lies the economic salvation of India, I am convinced. Individually spinning, I admit, is not a profitable occupation; nationally it is one of the most noble and the most profitable of occupations. Hence I have called spinning the *yajna* of this age for India. I was gladdened beyond measure when His Holiness told me that he would spin himself (Cheers.) and he has given me his assurance that henceforth he is going to ask everyone of his devoted disciples not to appear in his presence unless he is clad in spotless khaddar. I expect all the educated men among you to feel the privilege of spinning and the privilege of wearing khaddar. I expect you to go amongst your women folk and ask them to do likewise. You do not go in for the heavy saris that the Tamil sisters wear in the Madras Presidency. You do not go in for variety and colour. I am charmed with the spotless white dress of your women. A few yards of cloth suffices for the wants of men and women. You must regard it as a matter of shame and humiliation and degradation that you should have to fall back upon Manchester or Ahmedabad calico. If you would attend to these things, that would be your contribution to the national cause or to the cause of satyagraha at Vykom. Do not be frightened that it is a long-drawn-out battle. His Holiness told me yesterday that we might not see the end of this agony during our life time, in this generation, and that I should have to wait for another incarnation of mine before I had the pleasure of seeing the end of this agony. I respectfully differed from him. I hope to see the end in this very age during my lifetime, but I do not hope to do so without your assistance. Assist me to the full measure of your ability to show to you that this wrong becomes a thing of the past. Do your duty manfull

and I undertake to show to you that this fifth class from Hinduism entirely eradicated. (Cheers.) May God grant the necessary strength and determination to His Holiness to infect you with a proper understanding and may God grant you the wisdom and the strength to carry out this sacred task.

I tender my thanks publicly to His Holiness for the extreme kindness that he has shown to me and the hospitality that he has extended to me. I thank you once more for the address that you have presented to me and for the patience with which you have listened to me, but the best reward that I ask you to give me, I expect, is the translation of what you have listened to in action (Loud and continued cheers.)

The Hindu, 16-3-1925

171. SPEECH IN REPLY TO STUDENTS' ADDRESS, TRIVANDRUM[1]

March 13, 1925

It is a common superstition in India, and more so outside India—because, that is what I find from my correspondence in Europe and America—that I am an opponent, a foe, of science. Nothing can be farther from truth than a charge of this character. It is perfectly true, however, that I am not an admirer of science unmixed with something that I am about to say to you. I think that we cannot live without science, if we keep it in its right place. But I have learnt so much during my wanderings in the world about the misuse of science that I have often remarked, or made such remarks, as would lead people to consider that I was really an opponent of science. In my humble opinion there are limitations even to scientific search, and the limitations that I place upon scientific search are the limitations that humanity imposes upon us. I was only the other day discussing with a friend on the uses of science, and at that time I told him a story of my life which I propose to repeat to you. I told him that there was a time in my life when I very nearly went in for medicine and I told him also that had I gone in for it, probably, I would have become a celebrated physician or a celebrated surgeon or both; because, really I am a lover of both these branches and I feel that I could have rendered a great deal of service in that department. But

[1] At the Maharaja's College of Science



when I understood from a medical friend—and he was a distinguished doctor—that I would have to practise vivisection I recoiled with horror from it.[1]

Probably, some of you will laugh at my horror, but I do not want you to laugh at it. I want you to consider carefully what I am really saying. I feel that we are placed on this earth to adore our Maker, to know ourselves, in other words, to realize ourselves and therefore to realize our destiny. Vivisection cannot add, in my opinion, an inch to our moral height. It may—though many medical men tell me that it is not an absolutely correct statement—it may, I say, bring in some relief to a man whose body is ailing. But I must honestly confess to you that I believe in placing limitations upon the remedies for keeping the body alive. After all it is a broken weed to rely upon. It may slip out of our hands at any moment. I recovered from the skilful handling of Col. Maddock[2] from the operation that was performed by him upon me. But there was no guarantee whatsoever that after my recovery I may not fall under a stroke of lighting or under some other accident. Such being the case, I feel that we have got to explore whether we should restrain ourselves or whether we might let ourselves go.

I have only given you one illustration of the limitation that I would place upon scientific research and upon the uses of science. Therefore, I would simply say—as I have said to so many of the students of India, and I have the good fortune to enjoy the confidence of the student world and the good fortune to come in contact with the thousands and thousands of students all over India, and therefore I would not hesitate to tell them—that they must make up their minds about one thing at least in life, viz., to understand what they are in this world for. I place the same view in all humility before professors and teachers and it is for that reason that I have so often written and spoken upon and against the materialistic tendency of modern civilization—I will not say Western civilization though as it so happens for the time being, the two have become convertible terms. But there is another aspect also which I would like to place before you. Many students go in for science not for the sake of knowledge but for the sake of livelihood that their scientific studies might give them. It is true not only for students belonging to colleges of science, but it is equally true of students belonging to any other college. But

[1] *Vide* Vol. IX, pp. 395 & 479.

[2] Surgeon in the Sassoon Hospital, Poona, who operated upon Gandhiji for appendicitis in January 1924

seeing that science is one of the few things in which you have to go in for accuracy of thought and accuracy of handling, the warning that I wish to utter to you will perhaps come home to you with greater force than to others.

I would like you to keep the two most brilliant examples we have in our own dear country, and those two are Drs. J. C. Bose[1] and P. C. Ray[2]. At least to the students of science, they must be household words, household names. I believe that they are household names to the whole of the educated India. They went in for science for the sake of science and we know what they have achieved. They never thought of what the profession of science would bring them in the shape of money or fame. They cultivated it for the sake of it and Sir J. C. Bose once told me that he had accepted the limitations for himself long before I had uttered a single word about how we should apply our minds to science and I speak upon his authority that all his researches have been devoted in order to enable us to come nearer our Maker.

But students in India labour under one very serious disability. Those who go in for this class of education or for higher education are drawn from the middle class. Unfortunately for us and unfortunately for our country, the middle classes have almost lost the use of their hands and I hold it to be utterly impossible for a boy to understand the secrets of science or the pleasures and the delights that scientific pursuits can give, if that boy is not prepared to use his hands, to tuck up his sleeves and labour like an ordinary labourer in the streets.

I well remember the classes that I used to attend on chemistry. It seemed to me then to be one of the dullest subjects. (Laughter.) I know now what an interesting subject it is. Although I am an adorer of all my teachers, I must confess to you that the blame was not mine but that of my teacher. He asked me to learn by heart all those awful sounding names without knowing what they were. He never agreed to place even the different metals before me. I had simply to learn things by heart. He brought frightful notes carefully written by him, read those notes to us; we had to copy those notes and memorize them. I revolted and failed in that one subject, (Laughter.) so much so that he might not have issued to me the certificate for going in for my Matriculation Examination. Fortunately for me, I was at that

[1] 1858-1937; botanist; Fellow of the Royal Society; founded the Bose Institute near Calcutta

[2] 1861-1944; Chemist and patriot

time ill; he took pity on me and issued the certificate. Had it been so, he would really have blamed me for not having passed in the Chemistry paper instead of blaming himself.

So, the professors and teachers—I except you, Sir, and your race from the category—the Indian teachers and professors and the Indian students, all sail in the same boat. Science is essentially one of those things in which theory alone is of no value whatsoever—unless you have practical knowledge and unless you conduct practical experiments. I wonder how far you go in for practical experiments and how far you take the keenest delight in it. If you go in for science in the right spirit then I know that there is nothing so great or so valuable for making us accurate in thought and accurate in action. Unless our hands go hand in hand with our heads we would be able to do nothing whatsoever.

Unfortunately we, who learn in colleges, forget that India lives in her villages and not in her towns.

India has 7,00,000 villages and you, who receive a liberal education, are expected to take that education or the fruits of that education to the villages. How will you infect the people of the villages with your scientific knowledge? Are you then learning science in terms of the villages and will you be so handy and so practical that the knowledge that you derive in a college so magnificently built—and I believe equally magnificently equipped—you will be able to use for the benefit of the villagers?

Lastly then, I place before you the instrument to which you may apply your scientific knowledge and that is the humble spinning-wheel. Seven lakhs villages in India are today pining for want of that simple instrument. It was in every home and every cottage of India only a century ago, and at that time, India was not a lazy country that it is today. Her agriculturists—and agriculturists form 85 per cent of the population—were not forced to be idle for at least four months in the year. That is not what I am telling you. This is not my testimony. This is the testimony of another scientist, that is Mr. Higginbottom[1]. He has lately been giving evidence before the Taxation Committee and he said that India's poverty, which was growing, would not diminish but would grow unless the Indian millions had a supplementary occupation. Now apply your scientific means to finding out what such supplementary occupation can be which will serve the needs of 7,00,000 villages scattered over a surface 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad, and I assure you, you will come to the same irresistible

[1] Of the Agricultural Institute of Allahabad

conclusion that I have, that nothing but the spinning-wheel can do it.

The spinning-wheel has gone out of use now. Wherever I go I ask for a spinning wheel and instead of a spinning-wheel I get a toy. I cannot get good yarn, which will give you good khaddar, out of toys. It is for you to make the spinning-wheel hum. I present to you the noble example of Dr. P. C. Ray who is the maker of the Bengal Chemical Works. It is a growing concern which has furnished a calling for hundreds of students. But Dr. Ray is a scientist of scientists and he wanted to give the benefit of his scientific knowledge to the villagers of India. Because he was working at the time of the Khulna famine he saw the secret of the spinning-wheel and you know today that he is devoting his life only to the spinning-wheel propaganda and the noble band of workers under him, all scientists, are endeavouring to perfect the spinning-wheel, to perfect every accessory required for the spinning-wheel. It is a noble calling. It is worthy of scientists. May it also find an abiding place in your hearts. I thank you for giving me this patient hearing. (Cheers.)

The Principal then garlanded Mahatmaji and presented a beautiful flower bouquet. Mahatmaji said, "I thought it would be of homespun yarn." As Mahatmaji stepped into the car he said, "I expect to see you all next time in khaddar, khaddar woven by yourselves." Amid cries of "*Vandemataram*" and cheers Mahatmaji left the Science College premises.

The Hindu, 19-3-1925

172. SPEECH IN REPLY TO WELCOME ADDRESSES, TRIVANDRUM[1]

March 13, 1925

Mahatmaji, in the course of a joint reply, wished publicly to express his thanks to Her Highness the Maharani and also to the Dewan whom he interviewed on the Vykom struggle. He had also visited Swami Narayana Guru at Sivagiri Math and heard some of the *Pulaya* boys reciting Sanskrit. *Ezhavas* were clean and as good as the highest in the land and it hurt his sense of religion, humanity and sense of nationalism because the Swamiji could not enter the prohibited roads of Vykom.

[1] This was Gandhiji's joint reply to the several addresses of welcome presented to him at a public meeting on the Cantonment maidan by the Travancore citizens, the Kerala Hindu Sabha, the Humanitarian Society, the local Congress and Khilafat Committees and the Hindi students.

Referring to the discussion with obstructionists at Vykom, the Mahatma said he placed three proposals before them for acceptance. The first was a referendum either at Vykom or the whole of Travancore restricted only to *savarna* Hindus[1], which the spokesmen would not accept but stated that the verdict of the majority could not possibly bind those who had settled convictions. In the second place Mahatmaji offered to place the authority on which the spokesman based his settled convictions before learned Shastris of India but it was said their decision as to authenticity and interpretation was not binding on the obstructionists who were free to reject it if hostile to them. Thirdly on behalf of satyagrahis, he undertook to nominate one Shastri as arbitrator asking the oppositionists to nominate their arbitrator, the Dewan sitting as umpire over them, Mahatmaji undertaking to be bound by the arbitrator's decision and the umpire, whatever it was. These offers were still open for acceptance, and he asked the *savarna* Hindus and the whole Hindu community to insist on breaking down the prejudice of orthodoxy in Vykom, and compel by pressure of public opinion the opening of these roads to the untouchables and unapproachables. Both the Maharani and the Dewan appreciated the proposals made and showed their sympathy with the reformers and both had promised to the best of their ability to help the reform movement otherwise than by legislation at the present moment. He felt sure that organized public opinion would help the reformers even by legislative action. He had invited Her Highness to help them in obtaining a referendum, but whether she was able to do so or not, there was nothing to prevent them from organizing public opinion. Blind orthodoxy could not stand the fierce light of local public criticism provided it was sympathetic, non-violent and humble. There were only sixty thousand Brahmins, compared to eight lakh non-Brahmins and 17 lakh untouchables in Malabar, and while he was gratified on their educational advancement, he felt they should not be refused the rights of common humanity. Mahatmaji concluded his speech by making an appeal particularly to ladies who were present in large numbers to wear khaddar.

The Hindu, 14-3-1925

[1] Caste Hindus

173. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, TRIVANDRUM[1]

March 14, 1925

From what little I have been able to see of Travancore and its conditions, I can heartily endorse the sentiments that you have expressed in your address in connection with the Royal House of Travancore. As I have been saying to my friends who were with me, the severe simplicity of the Royalty in Travancore has bewitched me. I know the position of so many Princes of India that I must confess I was totally unprepared for this simplicity of life that rules the Royalty in Travancore and I thought that I would be guilty of discourtesy or suppressing the truth if I did not publicly give voice to what has so enraptured me.

After referring to the existence of two dirty slums in Trivandrum which he had noticed in his drive, he considered that a Municipal Councillor to be worthy of his office should regard himself as the custodian of the health of the citizens he represented. The majority of diseases in towns were due to dirt, filth and filthy air. He instanced the case of Trichinopoly where nuisance was committed on the banks of the Cauvery, the water of which was drunk by the people. Though Trichinopoly was a big town, its water supply was so awfully neglected by its citizens, but in Trivandrum he was struck by its cleanliness. People stifled themselves in big towns and cities in dungeons where no fresh air could be had and he was glad they lived in cottages in Travancore scattered all over the land. As a lover of municipal life, he had studied the activities of many Corporations and considered it a misfortune that he had not been able to devote his lifetime to municipal service.

Continuing, Mahatmaji stated that though his countrymen were suffering in South Africa under disabilities which he thought was only a passing phase, South Africa had very noble people who understood the world current. Whatever their views in connection with colour, he had the privilege of learning a great deal from their management of Corporations. They had made ugly spots pretty. Johannesburg which was merely a sandy desert, was turned into a garden, and they had spent a fortune over adorning that beautiful city. When plague broke out in Johannesburg, they spent money like water and rid the town of the disease in 24 hours. They isolated the area, and the Government, on the report of the Sanitary Inspector, reduced to ashes a beautiful market. To take time by the forelock and take energetic measures was municipal economy.

[1] At the Victoria Jubilee Town Hall

The ordinary life of municipalities throughout India should be untouched by politics, but concentrated upon the health of the citizens, upon their proper feeding and upon their proper education. He did not for a moment share the belief that municipalities should control merely the primary education of children, but thought they should take care of the highest form of education of the children that grew under their care. His experience with two great Corporations convinced him that municipalities should also have the control of the Police of their towns, besides the lighting of streets and scavenging. In congratulating the townsmen on the passing of the spinning resolution in the Council, he asked them to work it in earnest.

The Hindu, 16-3-1925

174. SPEECH AT LAW COLLEGE, TRIVANDRUM[1]

March 14, 1925

After paying a short visit to the Fort High School and the Mahila Mandiram, an association for women to which a hostel also is attached, Mahatma Gandhi came to the Law College where Mr. M. K. Govinda Pillai, Acting Principal of the College, received him. An address was presented by the students to which Mahatmaji made a reply in the course of which he gave an account of his early education, his first voyage to England and his initiation into the bar 40 years ago when the profession was overcrowded. He advised the students who took to law to have a complete mastery of facts, to understand human nature, to sift every case given to them, and if they found it a just cause that commended itself to them, to take it up or otherwise throw it overboard. They as lawyers should not sell their conscience for a mess of pottage. When they got a good case, they should identify themselves with the client and make the client's case their own by asking for all the facts they wanted without being led by him.

You know how strongly I have spoken against lawyers and their ways—but who should speak if not I who knew all the intricacies of legal life, who knew all the spheres of a legal life—and so I took courage to deliver myself of what was within me in connection with the legal profession.

The late Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Badruddin Tyabji[2] were not by any means the tallest among lawyers, but their services to

[1] In reply to an address of welcome presented by the students of the College

[2] 1844-1906; distinguished member of the Bombay Bar and later Judge of the Bombay High Court; President of the Indian National Congress in 1887

the national cause were invaluable. The late Mana Mohan Ghose[1] was a friend of the poor and he refused to charge fees when it was a poor man's case. He rendered invaluable services at the time of the Indigo riots in Bengal.[2]

In asking them to study the lives of lawyers like Ghose, Mahatma Gandhi asked them not merely to be satisfied with the heritage those great lawyers had left for them, but wished the present generation to do better. They should become the poor man's friend in every sense and then alone would they be able to justify the legal profession. Their end was not to get more than a decent livelihood or how to shine in life, but to serve humanity in order to serve the motherland. They ought not to become lawyers in order to increase cases. The education they received ought not to be prostituted to the base use of earning a livelihood, it ought to be used to promote moral growth to enable them to realize themselves, to understand that there was the Maker who saw everything and registered all thoughts, pure and impure, and the learning they derived should be dedicated to a vigorous self-analysis and not prostituted.

Concluding, Mahatmaji gave the students the message of the spinning-wheel and asked them to remember that not from the law-books or platform oratory but only from the spinning-wheel would they find the deliverance of India.

A purse of Rs. 500 was given over to Mahatmaji as proceeds of collections made yesterday at the public meeting.

The Hindu, 16-3-1925

175. IN SEARCH OF KNOWLEDGE

A French writer has written a story with the title "In Search of Knowledge". The writer sends many learned men in this search to different continents. One of them comes to India. This seeker goes to those who have understood *Brahman*[3], to those who have learned the Shastras, to courtiers and others, but fails to get knowledge anywhere. He is convinced that knowledge means the search for God. Finally, he comes upon the home of an *Antyaja*. Here he finds devotion at its best. Here for the first time he experiences simplicity, innocence, and artlessness. Here he comes face to face with God, and he reaches the conclusion that one who

[1] 1844-1896; one of the early leaders of the Indian National Congress

[2] Mana Mohan Ghose started a vigorous Indigo agitation in the columns of the *Hindu Patriot*. Subsequently, an Indigo Commission was appointed.

[3] The Supreme Being; an Upanishadic term for reality

wishes to discover God easily must search for Him amongst the poor and the humble.

This is an imaginary story. Our Shastras, however, bear witness to this very truth. Sudama[1] readily found God. Mirabai[2] found God when she ceased to be a queen. Duryodhana[3], because he went and sat near Krishna's head, got the latter's army only. God became the charioteer of Arjuna[4] who sat at His feet.

These thoughts have occurred to me because of the following letter:[5]

It has been written by one who has a clear conscience. The correspondent is in search of knowledge. However, the more he seeks it, the more it evades him. He is making vain efforts to grasp by reason something which is beyond reason. Giving up the desire for the fruit of one's action does not imply that no result will follow. It implies that every action brings in its result and in the mysterious scheme of things, where fibres are so interwoven that the trunk is not distinguishable from the brachnes, who can identify the fruit of one man's action amidst the complex of the collective acts of many persons? What right have we to know this? Even a king's soldier has no right to know the result of his own action, why should we who are the servants of the people know the results of our particular actions? Is it not enough to know that action necessarily brings results?

This correspondent, however, has no faith in *Ramanama*, no faith in God. I beg him to have faith in the experiences of millions of men. The world subsists on the omnipresence of God. *Ramanama* is God's name. If anyone is hostile to *Ramanama*, let him worship God by any other name that he likes. There is no reason to believe that the example of Ajamil[6] is fictitious. But the question is not whether Ajamil did exist; it is whether someone did save himself by chanting the name of God. To disregard the experiences of mankind as described by the authors of the Puranas, is to disregard the history of mankind. The battle against *maya* is going on all the time. A person such as Ajamil chanted the name of Narayana while fighting that battle. Mirabai

[1] A poor Brahmin friend of Lord Krishna

[2] A medieval saint-poetess of Rajasthan; queen of Mewar

[3] Chief of the Kaurava princes in the *Mahabharata*

[4] Third of the Pandava brothers

[5] Not translated here. The correspondent, a young man of 25, had described his philosophical quandary.

[6] A hardened sinner who in his last moments called for his son, Narayan, and was saved by the divine attendants for uttering the name of God.

repeated the name of Giridhar[1] while sleeping, sitting, eating or drinking. This is not a substitute for struggle, but rather it sanctifies the struggle. Anyone who chants *Ramanama*, who repeats the *Dwadashamantra*, is not defeated in his battle with *maya*, but defeats the latter. Hence the poet has sung that although *maya* entices all, it accepts defeat at the hands of the true devotees of God.

The example of Rama confronting Ravana[2] is ever present before us. If this does not satisfy one, it only means that one regards Rama and Ravana as historical characters. As such, they no longer exist. However, Ravana as *maya* continues to exist today and Rama's devotees, those whose heart is His abode, are every day destroying Ravana.

What a delusion it is to desire to know that which is known only after death? What would be the plight of a child of five if it desires to know what is going to happen to him at fifty? However, just as an intelligent child can guess his future from the experience of others, we too can satisfy ourselves by guessing the state after death on the basis of other men's experience.

Where is the need, however, to know what is to happen after death? Is it not sufficient to know that good actions are well rewarded and evil ones bring forth bitter fruits? The fruit of the best actions is *moksha*, this is the definition of *moksha* that I would suggest to the above correspondent.

The correspondent has taken an image literally, has used a misleading metaphor and, as a result, has fallen into a trap. The image is not God. Man, however, projects godliness on it and makes it an object of rapt contemplation. We cannot create human beings out of wood nor use wooden dolls to serve our purpose; but hundreds of thousands of those good sons and daughters, who refresh the memories of their parents through photographs do nothing wrong! God is omnipresent, even a pebble in the Narmada can represent Him and serve as an object of worship.

Finally, if the correspondent feels that he will find happiness in villages and in service to villagers through the spinning-wheel and such other things, he should hasten to go there.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 15-3-1925

[1] Another name of Lord Krishna
[2] Legendary ruler of Lanka and enemy of Rama

176. CONCERNING "NAVAJIVAN"

A subscriber of *Navajivan* has written a long letter of complaint. Its substance is as follows:

1. *Navajivan* has become like a monthly magazine because it contains uninteresting and depressing articles on the spinning-wheel and khadi.

2. Mahadev gives something like a diary of my tours in the *Navajivan* and goes on writing on the same theme.

3. The supplement to *Navajivan* which is supposed to deal with education gives disheartening news regarding education; but it too has no plans for education.

4. Other articles find no place in *Navajivan*. This is indeed the limit.

5. Perhaps no other weekly in the world is as expensive as *Navajivan*. Moreover, although the prices of paper have gone down, the price of *Navajivan* remains the same.

There is some truth in these arguments. The subscriber wishes me to discuss this matter in the paper.

I regard the subscribers as partners in *Navajivan*. I insist on publishing it only as long as a certain minimum number of persons subscribe to it. I also propose to meet its expenses through subscriptions alone and not through advertisements. Hence its subscribers can, if they so desire, put an end to its publication.

It is indeed true that *Navajivan* is not a newspaper, but a paper intended to propagate certain views. It tests these views in two ways: in the first place by bringing them up for discussion from time to time, and secondly, by finding out the number of people who support these views.

Navajivan searches for the means for securing swaraj and puts them before the public; hence it presents something new. It does not attempt to do what other newspapers do. What is not found in other newspapers constantly appears in *Navajivan*, and in this way the paper maintains its novelty and distinctiveness. It does not propose to compete with other newspapers.

It is obvious that *Navajivan* is not as interesting as it used to be. At one time its subscribers numbered about 40,000 as against only 6,000 today. Swami Anand believes that the reason is that now-a-days I write more for *Young India* and less for *Navajivan*. I do not think this is correct. *Young India* is in the same pitiable

plight today as *Navajivan*. Its circulation, too, which had reached the figure of 30,000 is now almost the same as that of *Navajivan*.

Nevertheless, I still cherish the desire to write more in *Navajivan*. God willing, it will be fulfilled, and then the Swami's doubts will be resolved.

The fact is that what I am putting before the public now is neither intoxicating nor exciting. Moreover, there is no hope of winning swaraj soon. *Navajivan* does not put forward new means for securing swaraj but it rather attempts to place before the public the same old means in new ways. It is interesting precisely because it is uninteresting. As it promotes the cause of swaraj, it is only those who have faith in the spinning-wheel and such other means that subscribe to it; this is enough to satisfy me. Its publication will continue so long as a certain minimum number of subscribers are pleased with it.

Those who look upon the spinning-wheel as a powerful means for securing swaraj, those who regard it as the panacea for ridding India of her poverty, will not tire of *Navajivan*. I have no doubt that those who have patience and faith will come to realize the power of that weapon, if not today then tomorrow, and I hope that readers of *Navajivan* will never entertain such doubts.

The fact that Shri Mahadev Desai gives a diary of my tours should not be a cause for complaint. My tours are not for my pleasure but for service. Hence readers have a right to know their impact and it is my duty to report it in some form or other. It is indeed a fault of Mahadev's diary that it often praises me. That, however, seems to be inevitable. My secretary who travels along with me and who works as my slave, can hardly be my critic. What inspires him to accompany me can be only love or a sort of fascination. He is not tempted by a salary. I can exercise restraint on his praises, but I cannot altogether prevent these. If the good opinion of those who are my close associates does not swell my head with pride, I would rather look upon it as a burden and make special efforts to be worthy of it. As long as I do so, this praise is not likely to prove harmful.

Nevertheless, I wish to stress this criticism of the correspondent. There is always a danger lurking behind praise. If a son continuously praises his father, he is likely to commit the sin of misleading his father. Hence a son who loves his father does not praise him. On the other hand, the father who continuously praises his son is likely to do him harm rather than good. Or, friends who sing the praises of each other are likely to dig each other's graves.

Hence, I request Mahadev to comprehend the essence of the correspondent's criticism and act upon it. I myself will try and be more on my guard.

There is a difficulty even in this, namely, that I cannot read all that Mahadev writes before it is published in *Navajivan* and I cannot do so even afterwards. Hence certain things are published which could have been omitted had I read them in time. In these circumstances, if *Navajivan* performs other useful service, this particular defect, so far as it is unavoidable, may please be ignored by those like the present subscriber.

The supplement on education is also issued as a matter of service. When it was decided that the Vidyapith would save a considerable sum by issuing its magazine on education as a supplement to *Navajivan*, it was resolved to do so. It too reflects a truthful picture of national education, and hence, it is but natural that its readers feel disheartened. The truth, even if it is uninteresting or painful, must be told wherever it is relevant. National education is at a low ebb today, hence a review of it must carry disappointing news. However, rays of hope are emerging from this dark disappointment. The reader should not concentrate on the number of children who take advantage of it, but should rather note the kinds of difficulties amidst which the ship of education is making headway. That which is being poured into national education today will generate fearlessness in children, will make them fit for swaraj, and will lead to their physical, mental and spiritual advancement.

There is no need now to show why the price of *Navajivan* cannot be reduced. Nevertheless, I would add that those who subscribe to *Navajivan* are its owners, and the profits earned by it are not private but public income. *Navajivan* cannot be made a monthly as it does not contain merely articles; it is a weekly record of progress towards swaraj.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-3-1925

177. QUINTESSENCE OF NON-VIOLENCE

A certain gentleman asks the following questions:

1. Is it a fact that in the manufacture of foreign sugar, bones, blood and such other unclean things are added?

2. Can anyone who observes the vow of non-violence consume foreign sugar?

3. Will those who wear khadi as a matter of non-violence continue to do so after securing swaraj or will they wear all kinds of cloth afterwards?

4. Is khadi related to non-violence or is it a political matter? As between [Indian] mill-made cloth and foreign cloth, which is worse from the standpoint of violence, considering that both are equally machine-made?

5. Can anyone who observes the vow of non-violence drink tea? If the answer is in the negative, how does it involve any violence?

I hesitate to answer such questions as they indicate ignorance. Nevertheless, since readers frequently raise such doubts, it is proper that they should be resolved. Moreover, while answering these questions, I wish to indicate the essence of non-violence as I understand it.

It is not that foreign sugar contains bones and such other substances, but that these are said to be used in the process of refining sugar. There is no reason to believe that Indian sugar is not subjected to this same process.

Hence, from the standpoint of non-violence, the use of both kinds of sugar should, perhaps, be given up. Or, if it has to be taken, the process of its manufacture should be ascertained. Thus, foreign sugar has to be renounced solely for giving an impetus to swadeshi. There is, however, a subtle non-violent consideration for which all sugar might be given up. Every process involves violence, hence the less an edible substance is processed, the better. It is best to eat sugarcane, jaggery is next in order, and sugar is the worst of all. I do not see any necessity for the common man to enter into such minute details.

Those who wear khadi should continue to do so after the attainment of swaraj, both for the sake of swaraj and of non-violence. The very same means by which we shall secure swaraj will enable us to preserve and strengthen it. A nation which relies upon others for its necessities loses its independence or enslaves others. Wearing khadi is a matter of non-violence, politics and

economics. In accordance with the above-mentioned law, khadi involves less of violence as it is processed less.

Then again, as between foreign and [Indian] mill-made cloth, although both are manufactured by the same kind of machines, the use of the latter involves less of violence, as wearing it connotes a feeling of love for our neighbours, whereas the use of foreign cloth not only implies a lack of such feeling but connotes the presence of sheer self-indulgence, selfishness and indifference to others. It also implies absence of benevolence, and non-violence.

Anyone who practises the vow of non-violence may or may not drink tea. There is life even in tea; it is not an essential article of food and, therefore, the violence involved in drinking it is not unavoidable. Giving up tea is therefore desirable. Indentured labourers are employed wherever there are tea gardens. India is well aware of the miseries of such labourers. From the point of view of non-violence, an article in producing which the labourers suffer should also be given up. In actual practice, we do not go into such minute details, hence we could regard tea as being innocent from the standpoint of non-violence just as we do in the case of other things. From the medical point of view, tea is more harmful than beneficial, especially when it is boiled.

It is clear from the above questions that those who talk of non-violence know very little about it. Non-violence is a quality of the mind. One who has not understood it will gain little by renouncing any number of things. A sick person who gives up many things because of his illness gets no other benefits besides being cured of his disease. The victims of famine, who get no food to eat, do not reap the fruit of fasting for that reason. One who has no self-control, although his outward acts may look like the result of such control, acquires no merit. Non-violence does not consist merely in restrictions on eating. It is the virtue of the Kshatriya. A coward cannot practise it. The brave alone can show mercy. An act can be said to be non-violent in so far as it is compassionate. Knowledge is necessary for compassion. Blind love is not non-violence. The mother who under the influence of blind love pampers her child in all sorts of ways practises violence born out of ignorance rather than non-violence. I wish that people would not attach undue importance to restrictions on eating and drinking and, while observing these restrictions, understand the meaning of non-violence in its broader sense, its subtle form and essence. A Western saint who eats beef because it is customary there, is a million times more non-violent than a wicked hypocrite who following the custom in his country does not eat beef. The per-

son who has put the questions to me should say to himself: "Although I give up foreign sugar, foreign cloth and tea, if I do not have compassion for my neighbour, if I do not regard other people's children as my own, if I am not honest in my trade, if I do not regard my servants as members of my family and do not love them, the restrictions on my diet are meaningless, they are mere show, senseless practices born out of ignorance." Narasinha Mehta's[1] sacred utterance is, "So long as one has not realized the truth about the *atman* all penance is in vain." To realize the self is to become non-violent. To be non-violent is to love even one's opponent, to do good to him who has harmed us, to reward vice with virtue, and while doing so, to look upon it not as something strange but as one's natural duty.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 15-3-1925

178. NOTES

A Teacher's Difficulty

A teacher writes:[2]

As this teacher has answered his own questions, my task is simplified. What I had said could not possibly mean that ten teachers or a single teacher should rest after teaching only one child. My contention is that not merely ten but even twenty teachers should not forsake a solitary student or leave a school but should try to increase their number. When plenty of students are available, the teacher should draw an allowance sufficient for his living, but his true test lies in his ability to accept nothing and starve to death if the need arises, and let his dependents also starve to death. Such a teacher sacrifices his relations, his parents, his children, his all for his work. What do those who practise other professions do when they incur heavy losses? If a person does not find a job despite all possible efforts, he lets his dependents starve along with himself; this should be the case with the teachers in national schools. This would make our dependents work for their livelihood. When teachers are idle for want of students, they should, of course, take up some other activity, but even while doing so, they must try to revive the school. Moreover, seeking out some other activity means that, in the absence of children, and

[1] A medieval Gujarati saint-poet
[2] The letter is not translated here.

during spare time, they should earn their living through the work of carding and weaving.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 15-3-1925

179. SPEECH IN REPLY TO WELCOME ADDRESSES, KOTTAYAM[1]

March 15, 1925

It has given me pleasure to be able to come to a place which is the centre of Christian influence. All the world over, I enjoy the privilege of having many Christian friends and I expect from Christians in India a great deal. There is nothing in the programme that I have ventured to place before the nation in which a Christian cannot whole-heartedly participate. Indeed I go so far as to say, if I may do so in all humility, that a Christian is the less a Christian if he does not whole-heartedly participate in this constructive programme. Those who are born and bred in this land, and to whom this land is as much the motherland as it is to me, as it is to the Mussalmans, if these Christians do not promote the nation's growth, to that extent, I venture to say, they are denying Christianity. You cannot serve God and refuse to serve your neighbours. But he who passes over his neighbour, be he Hindu, Christian or Mussalman, denies his God. I, therefore, suggest to my Christian friends that they should regard it as a special privilege, and therefore special duty, to serve India to the best of their ability.

We may have different religions, we may hold different views about our conception of God, we may have different views about salvation. But there is one thing which binds all Indians to the soil. There is one thing which binds all Indians, one to another, in an indissoluble tie and that is the spinning-wheel and its product khaddar. I harp upon khaddar and the spinning-wheel in season and out of season because I know that in khaddar alone, in the spinning-wheel alone, lies the economic salvation of India. The spinning-wheel is a symbol and a symbol of the binding tie between the masses and the classes. The classes derive their sustenance from the labour of the masses and I beg the classes to make some small return to the masses for what they receive from

[1] The addresses were presented by the Kottayam Municipality and the Hindi students.

them. I, therefore, say to every Indian, also to evry Englishman domiciled in India, or who derives his livelihood from India, let him adopt khaddar. In his own home let him dress himself from top to toe in khaddar and make a return to the masses. (Cheers.)

I say to the women of Kottayam and the surrounding places and to the men: "If you will reinstate the spinning-wheel in your homes, you will find that you have delivered to the famishing millions of India a message of hope and comfort."

Referring to untouchability he said:

Her Highness and the Dewan have assured me of their sympathy with the reformers and if I have understood them correctly I know that they are only waiting for an emphatic, unequivocal, disciplined and articulate expression of public opinion on the part of the *savarna* Hindus in order to do away with this disgrace and if the Hindus are true to their faith and will consider themselves as the custodians of the dignity of their religion, and if they feel as keenly as I do about this untouchability, they will not rest satisfied unless they have convinced the Maharani Regent and the Dewan that the whole public opinion of Travancore demands this reform.

The Hindu, 16-3-1925

180. ALL-INDIA COW-PROTECTION SABHA

[*March 15, 1925*][1]

Readers will recall that among the many conferences held at Belgaum last December, there was one for the protection of cows. Reluctantly I yielded to importunity and became its chairman. I believe that the protection of cows is an important and necessary task in this age for those who believe in Hinduism. I think I have been carrying on this work for many years in my own way. The whole of India is aware that the protection of cows is one of the vital reasons for the friendship that I deliberately wish to cultivate with the Muslims. However, I do not regard saving cows from Muslims as the most important aspect of cow-protection. The most important aspect is to make Hindus protect cows. My definition of cow-protection includes sparing cows and bullocks from the cruelty to which they are subjected.

[1] From the reference to Gandhiji's visit to Kanyakumari "yesterday", the article appears to have been written on March 15.

However, I have taken little direct interest until today in this great task of protection. I have practised penance in order to be worthy of taking such a part but have not yet attained such worthiness. I was, therefore, hesitant to accept the chair, and yet I did accept it. One of the resolutions of the conference related to establishing a permanent committee. I had to take part in that too. Hence, the committee nominated by the conference met in the last week of January[1] in Delhi. At that meeting it was decided to establish an All-India Cow-protection Sabha; its constitution was framed and accepted by the committee. The fact that this Sabha could progress so far is primarily due to the famous worker for the cause of the cows, Chaunde Maharaj, who comes from Wai. I am being drawn to it by his earnestness and initiative. The members of the committee included Dadasaheb Karandikar, Lala Lajpat Rai, Babu Bhagwandas[2], Shri Kelkar[3], Dr. Moonje[4], Swami Shraddhanandji[5] and others. However, I would regard the existence of such an Association an impossibility without Shri Malviyaji, the jewel of India. Hence, I suggested that it was necessary to obtain his approval before announcing the constitution of the proposed society. This suggestion was unanimously accepted. Hence, the task of showing him the draft constitution fell to me. I did so and he gave his approval.

Nevertheless, I hesitate to publish it because the chairmanship still rests with me. Moreover, the founders would like me to continue. I am doubtful about my suitability. I feel that so long as those who are regarded as leading Hindus do not approve of this great task, it cannot make any significant progress. I also fear that in view of my firm views on untouchability, my chairmanship may prove harmful. I expressed my doubts to Chaunde Maharaj again. He believes that my views on untouchability have nothing to do with this work and even if some individuals keep away on that score, it is our duty to carry on this work inspite of such a risk.

I do not know whether it is our duty or not. However, I put before the people the constitution which has been approved by

[1] On the 24th, according to Bombay Secret Abstracts, 1925

[2] Scholar and public worker of Banaras; took leading part in establishing Kashi Vidyapith, a National University at Banaras

[3] N.C. Kelkar (1872-1947); leader from Maharashtra; auther and journalist

[4] Dr. B. S. Moonje, Eye Surgeon, Nagpur; leader of the Hindu Mahasabha; attended the Round Table Conference in 1930

[5] Mahatma Munshiram (1856-1926); nationalist leader of Arya Samaj who took prominent part in public activities in Delhi and the Punjab and co-operated with Gandhiji

the committee. I expect to reach Bombay on the 26th; a date has then to be fixed for holding a general body meeting to pass the constitution. The meeting will then be held.

May He, who came to Draupadi's rescue, also come to my help. I am an orphan and look to Him for assistance. He alone knows what love I have for the cause of cow-protection. Should that love be pure, may He make this unworthy servant worthy. I have taken upon my shoulders many responsibilities that He has burdened me with. He may add one more to these, if He so desires. He alone can make me overcome my fears.

The readers may, perhaps, be unable to realize the nature of my suffering. I am writing this in the early hours of the morning. My pen shakes as I write this. There are tears in my eyes. Yesterday, I have had the *darshan* of Kanyakumari. If time permits, I will put before the reader the thoughts which overwhelm me. My predicament is very much that of a child who weeps profusely because he does not have the stomach to eat all that he wishes to. I am greedy. I am impatient to see and to demonstrate the victory of dharma. I am ever anxious to do all that may be needed for it. It is for this reason alone that I want swaraj as also the spinning-wheel, Hindu-Muslim unity, cow-protection, abolition of untouchability and prohibition. Which of these should I pursue and which should I give up? The ship of my longings is thus rolling back and forth on a stormy sea.

Once there was a fearful storm on the sea. All the passengers were agitated. All prayed for the help of Lord Krishna. The Muslims cried out in the name of Allah. The Hindus started uttering the name of Rama. The Parsis too started chanting their scriptures. I saw suffering on the faces of all. The storm subsided and all were happy. The very moment they were happy they forgot God and started behaving as if the storm had never been.

I am in a strange plight. I am ever in the midst of a storm. Hence I cannot but remember Rama, Sitapati[1]. However, sometimes, when I experience a great turmoil, I am even more perturbed than my fellow-voyagers and cry out, "Save me, save me."

With this preface, I remember the mother-cow, kneel before God and place this constitution[2] before the public.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 22-3-1925

[1] Husband of Sita

[2] Not translated here; *vide* "Draft Constitution of All-India Cow-Protection Sabha", 24-1-1925.

181. LETTER TO KALYANJI V. MEHTA

Monday [March 16, 1925][1]

BHAI KALYANJI,

I felt at first like sending you a wire, but succumbed to my tendency to thrift. Only today I read in *Navajivan* about your release. Well and good. I shall reach the Ashram on the 27th. You will no doubt come to see me there. I hope you are perfectly all right now.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of Gujarati: G.N. 2678

182. LETTER TO W. H. PITT

ALWAI,
March 18, 1925

DEAR MR. PITT[2],

With reference to the conversations[3] we have had as to the possibility and desirability of removing the barriers at Vykom and the picket which prevent satyagrahi volunteers from crossing the boundary-line on the roads leading to the temple, the position as I understand is this. It is common cause between Government and the reformers that the embargo upon the so-called untouchables making use of the roads around the temple should be removed. In your opinion the cause I have at heart will succeed earlier if I advise the satyagrahis to respect the boundary line pending final decision without the barricades and the picket. You tell me that the orthodox opinion gathers strength from the presence of the barricades and the picket, because the orthodox people wrongly infer that the intention in putting up the barricades and keeping the pickets is to help them to maintain their position. I have gathered from our conversations that it would be possible for you to have the existing orders withdrawn under which you are acting,

[1] The news of Kalyanji's release from Sabarmati Jail appeared in *Navajivan*, 15-3-1925.

[2] Commissioner of Police, Trivandrum

[3] The interview took place on March 10 at Trivandrum.

if I undertake to respect the boundary-line in the manner suggested by you. Whilst I hesitate to believe that the action proposed by you, if taken by the satyagrahis, will soften the hearts of the orthodox people and weaken their position, I fully appreciate the motive that lies behind your suggestion. I am, therefore, prepared to advise, by way of trial, adoption of the suggestion made by you. After all, what the satyagrahis want is to create an active and overwhelming public opinion in their behalf. Their object is not to irritate orthodoxy but to win it over to their side. Their object moreover is in no way to embarrass the Government in the prosecution of the campaign but, so far as it is possible, to enlist its sympathy and support on their side. I am therefore prepared to act upon your suggestion immediately on learning from you that the prohibitory order referred to herein is withdrawn. The effect of this would be that a very small number, not larger than at present, will continue to march up to the boundary-line by way of pleading their cause and stand or spin as they are now doing in front of the lines. They will not cross it on any account whatsoever whilst their agreement lasts and I expect that if it ever becomes necessary to challenge in a court of law the so-called right or custom under which the so-called untouchables are prohibited from making use of the roads round the temple the prosecution would be under the ordinary criminal law of Travancore. But I am hoping, with the assistance of the Travancore Government, to formulate public opinion so that it becomes irresistible and that without recourse to law on either side the common right of using public or semi-public roads is not denied to any class of people by reason of their birth. I have already discussed with you the three proposals made by me, namely, referendum by taking the vote of the *savarna* Hindus in select areas; arbitration; or interpretation and examination of the authority of texts from Hindu Shastras supposed to be available to the orthodox in support of their contention as to the use of roads round certain temples. It must be a very simple matter to adopt one or all of the suggestions.

In closing this letter I would place on record my sincere thanks for the perfect arrangement made by you during the whole of my sojourn in Travancore.[1]

I am,
Yours sincerely,

From a microfilm: S.N. 13267

[1] For the Police Commissioner's reply, *vide* footnote 1 to "Telegram to W. H. Pitt", 24-3-1925.

183. SPEECH IN REPLY TO ADDRESSES, PARUR[1]

March 18, 1925

Mahatmaji in his reply observed that it was in keeping with their traditions that they carried to the very letter whatever they resolved upon and hoped that the resolve, the Municipal Councillors had expressed that they would spin and wear khaddar hereafter, would be followed in earnest. He regretted that untouchability and unapproachability prevailed in worst forms in Travancore and they owed it to the Motherland and Hinduism to eradicate them. He observed that their tastes were so simple that neither men nor women considered it civilized to have multiplicity of clothing. He considered it a matter of shame and humiliation to wear foreign or mill-made clothes. The *Ezhavas*[2] were weavers who at one time produced all their clothing. He was informed by a Christian that it was impossible to wear khaddar and refused to believe that any Archbishop or Roman Catholic priest could command his flock not to use pure hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. Organization and expert assistance were required in enforcing their promise to wear khaddar and he appealed to them to get help from Tamilnad friends.

The Hindu, 19-3-1925

184. SPEECH AT UNION COLLEGE, ALWAYE

March 18, 1925

Gandhiji in his reply congratulated the college on its splendid site and on the hostel being opened by the great poet[3] of Asia. To think of earning one's livelihood out of mental culture was prostitution of education. He was afraid they neglected culture of heart and body. Concluding, the Mahatma asked the students not to be satisfied with benevolent neutrality with regard to khaddar and the spinning-wheel and placed before them the notable example of Dr. P. C. Ray who had dedicated himself to relieve the poor.

The Hindu, 19-3-1925

[1] Presented by the Municipality, the Parur citizens and the *Ezhavas*
[2] Community in Malabar traditionally regarded as untouchable
[3] Rabindranath Tagore who had visited the college

185. SPEECH AT ADVAIT ASHRAM, ALWAYE[1]

[*March 18, 1925*][2]

I am grateful to you for the beautiful address you have given me, which was well read out by an *Antyaja* boy. I am sorry that I cannot reply to you in Sanskrit. But had I been a Sanskrit pundit, even then I would not have replied in Sanskrit, because unfortunately today we Hindus have neglected the study of Sanskrit and therefore the masses cannot be expected to understand that language. But in order to be in tune with the Sanskrit atmosphere here, I would have spoken in Hindi, had it been possible to do so. However, you would not understand it; this proves our sad plight. I hope that the organizers of the Ashram will provide facilities to enable every student to understand Hindi. It is essential for us to recognize our limitations. It is beyond our power today to steep our minds in Sanskrit so that all our communication may be carried on in that language. It is not a difficult thing, however, to start communicating in Hindi.

Your motto is, "One community, one religion, one God". I had discussions with Shri Narayan Guru Swami on this subject and since you have given the subject the first place in your welcome address, I am also obliged to mention it in my reply. I feel that the attainment of what is implied by this motto is also beyond our powers. I can understand the principle of one God. In spite of our worshipping Him in a million different ways, our adoration finds its way to Him. However, I feel that so long as the human race continues, differences of creeds and religions will indeed exist, since there are many minds and not one. If we look at Nature, we shall find that it is full of diversities and it is through them that the one God becomes many. To expect that at any stage in the history of the human race the world will have a single religion and a single creed is, I think, as good as wishing that the laws of Nature should become topsy turvy. As a result of my limited reading, reflection and meditation, I feel that human society cannot do without the four-fold divisions of *varna* and *ashrama*. Hence, diverse religions and diverse creeds seem to be inevitable. Tolerance should be our aim. If all of us hold uniform views,

[1] In reply to an address of welcome in Sanskrit which was read out by a *Pulaya* student

[2] From *The Hindu*, 19-3-1925

where then is the scope for this generous virtue of tolerance? However, this search for uniformity is as futile as looking for flowers in the sky. Hence, the only possible alternative for us is to tolerate one another's views. According to my Muslim friends, I, a born idol-worshipper, a believer in incarnation and rebirth, must necessarily cultivate tolerance for Muslims who do not believe in idol-worship, who do not believe in incarnation and perhaps in rebirth. I, a believer in incarnations, do not think that Christ alone was God, or that he alone was the son of God. Nevertheless, I should tolerate the fact that my Christian friends look upon Christ as God and, similarly, Muslims and Christians should tolerate the fact that I bow in reverence to Kanyakumari and Jagannath. I can see that the age of tolerance is dawning in my own lifetime, because tolerance is at the root of the dharma of ahimsa. That very same tolerance is also at the root of the dharma of truth. Truth, like God, has a thousand diverse aspects. I cannot therefore insist that my view about the nature of truth is the correct one, and those of others wrong. That is why I feel we are fast approaching the age of mutual tolerance and mutual love. If, therefore, I cannot persuade Shri Narayan Guru Swami to accept the ideal of tolerance, I shall content by understanding the ideal in my own way.

Leaving aside this abstract discussion, let us come to more concrete things. While we cannot have before us the ideal of one caste, one religion and one creed, we can certainly have before us the ideal of performing one task daily and regularly for the good of the country. When shall we learn to wear khadi and thereby establish a bond of union with the poorest of the poor? We can learn this one *mantra* of making common cause with the poor. Instead of talking of universal love, it would be enough if we give up the calico made in the mills of Ahmedabad, Japan or England and win instead the simple love of the poor by wearing cloth spun and woven by our own brothers and sisters. Shri Narayan Guru Swami has assured me that he will himself take up spinning and forbid his followers from approaching him unless they are clad in khadi.

We have to practise the dharma of ahimsa and love in another matter as well. We must free our country from the sin of keeping our own brothers away as untouchables. A caste Hindu approached me and told me that the *Ezhavas* too treat those who belong to lower castes as untouchables. This must stop. Moreover, he also told me that if the *Ezhavas* and *Pulayas*[1] gave up

[1] Community in Malabar traditionally regarded as untouchable

liquor, the problem of untouchability would be automatically solved. I do not regard this as a proper defence. However, the only way open to us is to profit from this advice and do whatever needs to be done. We cannot answer back that caste Hindus too drink secretly. It is sufficient for us to be aware of our own faults and get rid of them. I hope that, in this Sanskrit atmosphere, you will bear in mind whatever I have briefly told you and speedily advance towards the religious ideal which Shri Narayan Guru Swami is placing before you.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-4-1925

186. SPEECH IN REPLY TO ADDRESSES, TRICHUR[1]

March 18, 1925

I am sorry that I cannot be in these pleasant surroundings for any length of time. I shall be leaving this beautiful country, I do not know for how long. It is difficult to tear myself away from all the overwhelming kindness. It is equally difficult to tear myself away from the beautiful scenery that I have witnessed around me. But among all these pleasant recollections the one bitter recollection that I shall carry with me is that this fair land should be blotted with the curse of untouchability and unapproachability. But I was reminded only just now that there is also in this land the curse of invisibility, that the very sight of man offends. If this is Hinduism I would renounce it today, but as a *sanatani* Hindu that I call myself, and one brought up in an orthodox family, I know that it is no part of Hinduism to have untouchability, unapproachability or invisibility as they are practised today. But I shall be leaving this land in the hope that all those crowds that have attended such gatherings and all those crowds who have associated themselves in the sentiments expressed in the addresses which have censured this caste custom will see to it that this blot is removed from Travancore and Cochin.

I have seen thousands of sisters in Travancore and Cochin. To see them in their beautiful white dress has been a perfectly pleasant and ennobling sight for me. But it has equally depressed me to find that they have taken to calico instead of khaddar. If you intend to do so it is possible for you to clothe yourselves, both

[1] Presented by the Municipality, the Nambudiri Yogakshema Sabha and the Trichur students at the Tekkingad Maidan

men and women, in khaddar without the slightst difficulty and without any loss of time. Not very long ago, every home in Malabar had a spinning-wheel. I ask you to reinstate the spinning-wheel in every home. You have even now thousands of *Ezhava* weavers weaving beautiful cloth. Spin, and they will weave the yarn spun by you. If you will only do this you will find out for yourselves that you have saved lakhs upon lakhs of rupees for your land. Both Travancore and Cochin together have a population of nearly 70 lakhs. If I were to count the cost of spinning and weaving, it will come to rupees three on an average per head. That means nearly two crores and ten lakhs. Just think what it means for this land and it costs no effort to you to clothe yourself in khaddar.

The Hindu, 19-3-1925

187. NOTES [-I]

VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

I offer no apology to the reader for giving much space in these pages to Vykom satyagraha by reproducing the whole of that portion of the address[1] of the Dewan of Travancore to its Popular Assembly which deals with the Vykom satyagraha. It enables the reader to understand and appreciate the nature of the brave struggle that is being carried on by a band of satyagrahis as also the importance of the cause for which satyagraha is being offered. Vykom is a test case so far as Travancore and, for that matter, Malabar is concerned. It affects the common rights of more than one sixth of the entire population of Travancore. Those therefore who are interested in the removal of the curse of untouchability cannot but read the Dewan's address with interest. I do not propose to comment on it this week as it would be unfair to do so in view of the fact that I am to have the honour of meeting him before this will have been printed and in view of the further fact that I have not at the time of writing completed my investigations. But I cannot help endorsing the remark of Dewan Bahadur T. Raghaviah that

> there is a world of difference between satyagraha meant to be an educative force and satyagraha intended as an instrument for the coercion of the Government and through them of the orthodox Hindu. What the satyagrahis should aim at is the conversion of the orthodox to whom untouchability is a part of their faith.

[1] *Vide* Appendix.

I make bold to state that from the very outset satyagraha at Vykom was intended to be an educative force and never an instrument of coercion of the orthodox. It was for that reason that the fast against the orthodox was abandoned. It was to avoid coercion of the Government by embarrassment that the barricades have been scrupulously respected. It was for that reason that no attempt was made to dodge the police. It has been recognized that what appears to the reformers as a gross and sinful superstition is to the orthodox a part of their faith. The satyagrahi's appeal has therefore been to the reason of the orthodox. But experience has shown that mere appeal to the reason produces no effect upon those who have settled convictions. The eyes of their understanding are opened not by argument but by the suffering of the satyagrahi. The satyagrahi strives to reach the reason through the heart. The method of reaching the heart is to awaken public opinion. Public opinion for which one cares is a mightier force than that of gunpowder. The Vykom satyagraha has vindicated itself in that it has drawn the attention of the whole of India to the cause and it has been instrumental in the Travancore Assembly considering in a remarkable debate a resolution favouring the reform sought for and lastly in eliciting a considered reply from the Dewan of Travancore. I am sure that victory is a certainty if only the satyagrahis will retain their patience and their spirit of suffering.

Man's Inhumanity to Man

In the midst of the incessant rush I am going through in this land of palms (Travancore) where I am writing these notes, I cannot resist noting down a never-fading sight I had to witness at Cochin. Cochin has imported from Japan numerous rickshaws which its well-to-do citizens use for their convenience. These are drawn not by animals but by men. I carefully noted as many of these carriers as passed. Not one impressed me with his physique. They had neither the calves nor the chest nor the arms well-formed for the arduous task of carrying a burden in the hot sun and melting heat. The rickshaws are built for carrying one passenger only. In my opinion, it is bad enough for a healthy and full-limbed man to be carried by man, but I was ashamed of my species and pained beyond measure to see two and even three passengers huddled together in some rickshaws. It was no doubt wrong for the carrier not to refuse to carry more than one burden. But what is one to say of the pair or the trio who in order to save a few coppers would not be ashamed to be carried by a member of their species who is hardly fit to carry even one of

them. I hope there is a law in Cochin prohibiting the carrying of more than one passenger in these rickshaws. And if there is one, I hope the kindly citizens will see to it that it is strictly obeyed. But if there is no such law, I hope that one would be passed making the carriage of more than one passenger an impossibility. If I had the power I would abolish the rickshaw. But that I know must remain a pious hope. But is it too much to hope that men who ply these rickshaws will be subjected to a strict medical examination as to their fitness for the heavy work?

Inter-dining

A correspondent asks: "Should children belonging to different castes and living in one boarding-house be made to dine together in a common dining-room?" The question is not well put. But the answer to the question as it is put would be that children cannot be *made* to inter-dine. If, however, it be urged that no boarding-house keeper can make rules requiring all who care to join it to inter-dine, it would be as unreasonable a demand as it would be to compel children who are admitted without such stipulation as to inter-dining to dine in company with children belonging to other castes. In the absence of any rule to the contrary, I should imagine that the presumption would be that the usual rules for separate dining arrangements would apply. This question of inter-dining is a vexed one and in my opinion no hard and fast rules can be laid down. Personally, I am not sure that inter-dining is a necessary reform. At the same time I recognize the tendency towards breaking down the restriction altogether. I can find reasons for and against the restriction. I would not force the pace. I do not regard it as a sin for a person not to dine with another nor do I regard it as sinful if one advocates and practises inter-dining. I should, however, resist the attempt to break down the restriction in disregard of the feelings of others. On the contrary I would respect their scruples in the matter.

The "Kisans" of Oudh

Mr. Manilal Doctor of Fyzabad sends me the following for publication:

> I have been brought over from Gaya to Fyzabad at the request of thousands of *kisans*.
>
> In Bihar—in Champaran—I was disillusioned. India is by no means a bed of roses for the workers on land. It is not surprising that Assam, Calcutta, Cawnpore, Ahmedabad, Burma and the distant Colonies are able to attract coolies. Oudh seems to be in a worse condition still. The cry is: "Let us be free from this foreign yoke and labour will have its

due." I am not sure in my mind that workers and peasants will get justice at the hands of those who are likely to succeed the British Government.

Anyhow, the position that I am prepared to act upon is this: The workers and peasants should not allow themselves to be made tools of by either Indian capitalists or the British Government. They must look after their own interests and only so far as may be consonant with them, that they may "co-operate" or "non-co-operate". Of course the charkha should spread amongst them and it will be better for them to spin yarn for clothing themselves with, than spin litigation during the slack months of the Indian year, which is absolutely dependent on the favours of the four rainy months (unlike the tropical colonies, where there are showers throughout the year).

India is a good country, but human beings—Indian and foreign—have "co-operated" to make a hell of it! ! ! How long Oh! Lord! ! How long ! ! !"

I hope that Mr. Manilal Doctor will succeed in introducing the charkha in every ptals village and in the act make a careful study of the economic position of the *kisans*. What we need is a patient and exact study of typical Indian villages of India such as Dr. Mann[1] published some years ago regarding a few Deccan villages.

Young India, 19-3-1925

188. A DIFFICULT PROBLEM

An Andhra correspondent invites attention to his difficulties as follows:

In last week's *Young India* in one of your answers to a Bengal correspondent on untouchability you have stated thus: "Since 'we' do take water from the hands of Sudras we should not hesitate to accept it from the hands of untouchables", meaning by "we" the high-caste Hindus. I do not know the customs *prevalent* in Northern India. But are you aware of the fact that in Andhra as well as in still Southern parts of India Brahmins do not only not take water from the hands of non-Brahmins (of any of the other three castes) but the more orthodox of them observe strict untouchability with non-Brahmins.

[1] Dr. Harold H. Mann; first Principal of the Poona Agricultural College; Director of Agriculture, Government of Bombay, 1923-27; author of *Land and Labour in a Deccan Village*

You have often said that you do not advocate inter-dining as essential to the removal of the present false notions of superiority of castes. You have quoted once an instance of Pandit Malaviyaji to bring out the fact that, living as you are in mutual admiration and respect, you could not think Malaviyaji meaning any contempt to you if he refused water or anything else from your hands. I agree there it might have meant no contempt. But do you know that the Brahmins of our part do not take food if seen by a non-Brahmin even if it be from a distance of hundred yards, let alone the touching of it by him? May I also point out that a word or two escaping the mouth of a Sudra in a street is enough to rouse the orthodox Brahmin at meal to anger—and he will go without meal the whole day? In what way can these facts be interpreted if they can mean no contempt? Has not the Brahmin put an air of superiority? Will you please enlighten me on these points? I am myself a Brahmin youth and hence write with first-hand knowledge.

Untouchability is a hydra-headed monster. It is a deeply moral and religious question. Inter-dining, to me, is a social question. Behind the present untouchability there is undoubtedly and necessarily contempt for a portion of one's species. It is a canker that is eating into the vitals of society. It is a denial of the rights of man. It does not stand on a par with inter-dining. And I would strongly urge social reformers not to mix the two. If they do, they would injure the sacred cause of "the untouchables and the unapproachables". The Brahmin correspondent's difficulty is real. It shows the length to which the evil has been carried. The name Brahmin should be, as it once was, a synonym for utter humility, self-effacement, sacrifice, purity, courage, forgiveness and true knowledge. But today this sacred land is cursed with divisions between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. In many instances the Brahmin has lost the superiority which he never claimed but which was his by right of service. He is now desperately striving to assert what he cannot claim and has, therefore, roused the jealousy of non-Brahmins in some parts of India. Fortunately for Hinduism and fortunately for the country there are Brahmins like the correspondent who are fighting with all their strength the tendency towards the ominous assertion and are serving the non-Brahmins with a selfless pertinacity which is worthy of their high traditions. Everywhere one finds Brahmins in the forefront fighting the evil of untouchability and supporting their brief with authorities from scriptures. I urge the Southern Brahmin of the type mentioned by the Andhra correspondent to recognize the signs of the times and rid himself of false notions of superiority or of superstition that smells sin in the visible approach of a non-Brahmin or regards his

dinner as polluted if he hears the voice of a non-Brahmin. The Brahmins taught the world to see *Brahman* in everything. Surely then there can be no defilement from outside. It comes from within. Let the Brahmin re-deliver the message that the untouchables and the unapproachables are the evil thoughts that one harbours. He taught the world to believe that "man is truly his own deliverer as he is also his own defiler or captor".

The non-Brahmin must not be ruffled by the things mentioned by the Andhra correspondent. Brahmins like the Andhra correspondent will fight, as they are fighting, his battle. He must not, as I fear is the growing tendency, despise the whole race of Brahmins because of the sins of a few. Let him be dignified enough not to claim right conduct towards himself from those who will misconduct themselves. I need not feel insulted because the passer-by does not acknowledge me or because he feels polluted by my touch or presence or voice. It is enough that I refuse at his bidding to move from my path or to desist from speaking for fear of his hearing my voice. I may pity his ignorant assumption of superiority or his superstition but I may not get irritated and develop the contempt I would fain resent when directed towards myself. The non-Brahmin will lose his case by loss of self-restraint. Above all let him not, by overstepping the mark, embarrass his Brahmin champions. The Brahmin is the finest flower of Hinduism and humanity. I will do nothing to wither it. I know that it is well able to take care of itself. It has weathered many a storm before now. Only let it not be said of non-Brahmins that they attempted to rob the flower of its fragrance and lustre. I would not have the non-Brahmins to rise on the ruin of the Brahmins. I would rather that they rose to the height that the Brahmins have occupied before now. Brahmins are born, not so Brahminism. It is a quality open to be cultivated by the lowliest or the lowest among us.

Young India, 19-3-1925

189. NOTES [*-II*]

"A MAD MAN OR A SAINT"

A friend has taken the trouble of copying out the following extracts from *My Magazine* which he tells me is intended for children and asks me to reply to it:

> Something happened to his soul in 1918 which was fatal to its power. He became neither a saint nor a statesman, but a fanatic. . . . In losing heart in Britain's word Gandhi also lost his head.
>
> In his anger against European civilization he has gone to the extreme point of condemning all science and all culture. He would abolish the schoolmaster and the doctor as well as the engineer. He would do away with the bacteriologist as well as the manufacturer. No one is to learn anything. The body of man is to dwell in everlasting passiveness and the soul is to do nothing but receive the whispers of God.
>
> We may seek to justify him, and say that European civilization is a disease. We may speak of disease and strikes, of slums and destitution, of vice and shameless luxury; and yet, when all is said and done, it is the engineer who has irrigated the deserts of India, the doctor who has fought down plague, and the schoolmaster who has quickened the Indian mind. Without the ceaseless toil of scientific men, India would be decimated by disease; and without the protection of Britain she would become the slave of Japan.
>
> Gandhi believes that the soul of men must get back to some fabulous time in the past when all was peace and love; we believe that the soul of man must march forward from barbarism and inertia to knowledge, power and dominion. Gandhi thinks we are on the wrong road; we think our road, difficult as it is, leads to a better world. Gandhi thinks a man is elevated only by his spirit; we think that a man's spirit can best be elevated by a mind that is never satisfied. We believe in work, knowledge, and dominion. Gandhi believes in non-resistance, ignorance and passiveness.
>
> There is something in this indictment against European civilization, but we must not be led away to suppose that India is a land of beauty, peace, and goodness, reposing in the love of God. There are things in India not to be spoken of, so horrible are they; and there are slums in India not to be matched by anything in Europe. If our civilization is dangerous to spritual life the civilization of India is fatal. Let the mind of man drowse, and it will perish.

It is not immodest to think that we can help Gandhi if he will do us the courtesy of regarding what is best in our civilization, and not only what is worst.

A LIBEL

The article from which the extracts are taken is said to be devoted to a critical examination of what I am supposed to stand for and is headed "An Extraordinary Man. Is He a Mad Man or a Saint?" I have often said that I do not claim to be an extraordinary man unless one who is mad after the search for truth be called extraordinary. I am certainly mad in the sense that every honest man should be. I have disclaimed the title of a saint for I am fully conscious of my limitations and imperfections. I claim to be a servant of India and therethrough of humanity.

The writer of the article is honest but ignorant and yet writes with an assurance which is amazing. The pity of it is that the writing of that character is not an uncommon thing in modern literature. If palpable untruth can be put before the public about contemporary men and women, one shudders to think of the distortion that must appear years after they are gone.

Let us see how truth has suffered at the hands of the writer of the article. "In his anger against European civilization, he has gone to the extreme point of condemning all science and all culture," says the writer. Though I have undoubtedly spoken and written strongly against European civilization, I cannot recall ever having condemned "all science and all culture". My life is a standing testimony against the libel. Every sentence that follows thereafter is the reverse of truth. Where the writer has derived his idea of desire to abolish schoolmasters and engineers I do not know. Anybody who knows anything of me knows that I loathe passiveness of the body. I recognize the everlasting activity of nature going on about me and I respond to it by keeping my own body and those of my co-workers in incessant activity, always, I hope, of a beneficial character. The writer tells us that "without the protection of Britain she (India) would become the slave of Japan". If a schoolboy was called upon to point out the inaccuracy of the statement, will he not say that without the slavery of Britain, India would be a free nation living in peace and alliance with Japan and her other Asiatic neighbours? The writer considers the civilization of India fatal to spiritual life. No European scholar to my knowledge has made such a statement. Whatever else India may not be, she is at least one thing. She is the greatest storehouse of

spiritual knowledge. She is the best representative of spiritual life. She does not let the mind "drowse" for one single moment.

"HOW TO LIVE"

On reading an article of his in *Young India*, a correspondent sent Mr. Andrews the following poser which he handed to me for reply some months ago:

> I was born and bred up in a village. My father used to repeat *Ahimsa paramo dharmah*[1] off and on, while engaged in religious conversations with his friends. It is, as you say, the complementary truth following from the original truth of the *Advaitam*[2]. Let me admit the truth substantially. Let me further submit that *Advaitam* is not confined to oneness of all spiritual life. It is, as you appear to hold, the oneness of all things in the universe, without any exception of whatever kind.
>
> The moment one gets himself fitted to catch *Advaitam* as his guide, his progress is assured. All differences must disappear. We are all one. How am I justified in injuring that which is myself? Here doubts begin to crop up. Is the idea of ahimsa to be carried into practice to its logical end? If so carried to the end, will it remain a virtue?
>
> My father used to repeat *Ahimsa paramo dharmah.* However, when the family buffalo took into its—why not 'her'—head not to stand still for being milked, my father used to take up the stick and beat her to her senses. That was for securing milk for his children. Did he do the right thing?
>
> The Hindus call the avatar of Rama as *Dharma Avatar*[3]. Rama killed Ravana. Was it a wrong deed? Rama killed Bali and, Bali protesting, Rama replied:
>
> अनुजवधू भगिनी सुतनारी
> सुनु सठ यह कन्या सम चारी
> इन्है कुदृष्टि बिलोकहि जोई
> तेहि बधे कछु पाप न होई[4]
>
> Here there is the doctrine of "Killing no murder" put in the mouth of the very avatar of dharma.
>
> We may descend further and come to the time of Lord Krishna. Here we have the *Bhagavad Gita.* Arjuna is unwilling to kill those who are, after all, his nearest relations. Lord Krishna urges him to fight and "kill" and the doctrine of ahimsa is left in the background.

[1] "Non-violence is the highest dharma."

[2] Absolute monism; literally, non-dualism

[3] Incarnation of dharma

[4] "Wife of a younger brother, sister, and the daughter-in-law—all these, O wicked one, are as one's own daughter. There is no sin in killing a person who casts an evil eye on them."—*Kishkindha Kanda* (Book Four) of Tulsidas's *Ramacharitamanasa*

One has thus to inquire whether there is a limit to the practice of ahimsa. A girl is being outraged. Is she not justified in killing the devil to escape from his clutches? Is she to observe non-violence?

Catching fish is violence. Uprooting plants for use as vegetable is violence. Use of disinfectants for germs of disease is violence. How to live?

A Brahmin

If the father had not milked the unwilling buffalo, the world will have lost nothing. There are many things put in the mouth of Rama by Tulsidas which I do not understand. The whole episode about Bali is of that type. The literal application of the lines attributed to Rama by Tulsidas will land the doer in trouble if it will not send him to the gallows. Everything related of every hero in *Ramayana* or *Mahabharata* I do not take literally, nor do I take these books as historical records. They give us essential truths in a variety of ways. Nor do I regard Rama and Krishna as portrayed in the two poems as infallible beings. They reflect the thoughts and aspirations of their ages. Only an infallible person can do justice to the lives of infallible beings. One can therefore only take the spirit of these great works for only guidance, the letter will smother one and stop all growth. So far as the *Gita* is concerned, I do not regard it as a historical discourse. It takes a physical illustration to drive home a spiritual truth. It is the description not of a war between cousins but between the two natures in us—the good and the evil. I would suggest to "A Brahmin" an examination of the doctrine of ahimsa apart from the incidents he quotes. *Ahimsa paramo dharmah* is one of the highest truths of life. Any fall from it must be regarded as a fall. Euclid's straight line may not be capable of being drawn on a black-board. But the impossiblity of the task cannot be permitted to alter the definition. Judged by that test even the uprooting of a plant is an evil. And who does not feel a pang on plucking a beautiful rose? That we do not feel a pang on plucking a weed does not affect the doctrine. It shows that we do not know the place of weeds in nature. Therefore all injury is a violation of the doctrine of ahimsa. The fullest application of ahimsa does make life impossible. Then, let the truth remain though we may all perish. The teachers of old have carried the doctrine to its logical extent and laid down that the physical life is an evil, an embarrassment. *Moksha* is a bodyless superphysical state in which there is neither drinking nor eating and therefore neither the milking of buffalo nor the plucking even of a weed. It may be difficult for

us to grasp or appreciate the truth, it may be and is impossible fully to live up to it. Nevertheless, I have no doubt that it is the truth. And virtue lies in regulating our lives in accordance with it and to the best of our ability. A true perception is half the battle. Life becomes livable and lovable only to the extent that we apply the grand doctrine in actual practice. For then we hold the flesh in bondage rather than live in perpetual bondage to the flesh.

Young India, 19-3-1925

190. KOHAT

[*March 19, 1925*]

I am able only now to publish my statement[1] and that of Maulana Shaukat Ali on the Kohat tragedy. It was not possible to do so earlier as both Maulana Shaukat Ali and I have been travelling and not staying at the same place. I am not sure that the publication at this juncture of our statements on the tragedy can do any tangible good except in so far as the fulfilment of a promise must do in any case. The publication will, however, do one indirect good. There are material differences between us on the inferences we have drawn from the same facts. There are differences too in the degree of reliance we have placed upon the evidence given to us by witnesses. When we discovered the differences between us we both felt grieved and tried to come nearer each other. We even referred our differences to Hakim Saheb and Dr. Ansari for our guidance. Fortunately, Pandit Motilalji was present at our discussion. We could find nothing in the discussion to induce us to make any radical alteration in our viewpoints. These discussions took place at Delhi. We then decided to travel together a few hours to re-examine ourselves and to see whether we could remodel our statements. Beyond making some alterations we were not able to come nearer. We also examined the suggestion made by Hakim Saheb and supported to an extent by Pandit Motilalji not to publish the statements. But we, or at least I, came to the conclusion that the public which had hitherto known the Ali Brothers and me to be always in agreement about so many public things should know that we too might differ on some matters, but without suspecting each other of conscious bias or wilful perversion of facts and without mutual

[1] A draft (S.N. 10676 R) of this was prepared earlier; *vide* "Kohat Hindus", 9-2-1925.

affection being in any way affected. Our open acknowledgment of our differences will be an object-lesson in mutual toleration. Let the public know that neither the Maulana Saheb nor I have spared pains to come near each other. But there was no desire for suppression of opinion. We have made alterations in our original drafts. But in no case has either party surrendered his confirmed opinions. We have each softened expressions here and there so as not to wound susceptibilities. But beyond that the originals have not suffered material alterations.

M. K. G.

MR. GANDHI'S STATEMENT

TIRUPUR,
March 19, 1925

Maulana Shaukat Ali and I went to Rawalpindi on the 4th February to meet the Hindu refugees and the Mussalmans of Kohat to whom the Maulana had written and who were expected to come to Rawalpindi. Lala Lajpat Rai followed a day later. But unfortunately he came with a predisposition to fever and was laid up in bed the whole of the time we were in Rawalpindi.

Of the Mussalmans Maulvi Ahmad Gul and Pir Saheb Kamal were the principal parties whose evidence we took. The Hindus had their written and printed statements to which they had nothing to add. The Muslim Working Committee which is functioning in Kohat did not and would not come. They sent a wire to Maulana Saheb saying:

> A reconciliation has already been effected between Hindus and Muslims. In our opinion this question should not be reopened. The Muslims should therefore be excused for not sending their representatives to Rawalpindi.

Maulvi Ahmad Gul and another gentleman who came to Rawalpindi with him were members of the Working Committee but they said they came not as such but as members of the Khilafat Committee.

It was difficult to come to any conclusions on details without a thorough examination on the spot and without examining many more witnesses. This, however, we could not do. We could not go to Kohat nor was it our purpose to rake up the whole controversy again by going into minute details. Our purpose was to bring together the two parties if it was at all possible. We therefore confined ourselves to elucidating the main facts.

As I am writing this without a detailed consultation with the Maulana Saheb, I state my own conclusions, leaving him either to confirm mine or to state his own.

The causes of the events of the 9th September and after were many. Among these was the resentment felt by the Mussalmans over the resentment felt in their turn by the Hindus over the conversions (so-called in my opinion) of Hindus—men and married women, and consequent steps taken by them, the Hindus. The desire of the *parachas* (Mussalman traders of Kohat) to oust the Hindus of Kohat was another.[1] The resentment felt over the alleged abduction by Sardar Makhan Singh's son of a married Mussalman girl was the third.[2]

The cumulative effect of these causes was to create great tension between the two communities. The immediate cause that lighted the conflagration was a poem in the notorious pamphlet published by Mr. Jiwandas, Secretary, Sanatan Dharma Sabha at Rawalpindi, and imported by him into Kohat. It contained a number of *bhajans* or poems in praise of Shri Krishna and Hindu-Muslim unity. But it also contained the one in question. It was a highly offensive poem, undoubtedly calculated to wound Muslim susceptibility. Mr. Jiwandas was not the author. He did not import the pamphlet in order to irritate the Mussalmans. As soon as the matter was brought to the notice of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha, it sent a written apology to the Mussalmans for the offending poem and removed it from the unsold copies. This might have satisfied the Mussalmans, but it did not. The unsold copies, over 500 according to Mussalman testimony and over 900 according to Hindu testimony, were brought to the Town Hall and publicly burnt in the presence of the Assistant Commissioner and a large concourse of Mussalmans. The cover of the pamphlet contained a portrait of Shri Krishna. Mr. Jiwandas was arrested. This took place on the 3rd September, 1924. He was to be brought before the Court on the 11th. The Hindus tried to avoid the Court proceedings and to settle the matter amicably. A Khilafat deputation, too, came from Peshawar for the purpose. The Mussalmans wanted to try Mr. Jiwandas according to *Shariat*. The Hindus declined but offered to submit to the award of the Khilafatists. The negotiations fell through. The Hindus, therefore, applied for discharge of Mr. Jiwandas. He was released

[1] The original draft here has: "(3) Resentment over the Hindu abstention from the rejoicings over the Turkish Victory celebrations."

[2] The original draft here has: "The case has been since found to be false."

on the 8th September under security and under instructions to leave Kohat. He did leave Kohat immediately. This anticipation of the date of trial enraged the Mussalmans. During the night of the 8th September they held an excited meeting at which fiery speeches were made. It was resolved to approach the Deputy Commissioner in a body and to demand the re-arrest of Mr. Jiwandas and the arrest of certain other members of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha. Reprisals against the Hindus were threatened if the Deputy Commissioner did not listen to the demand. Messages were sent out to the neighbouring villages to join the assembly in the morning. About two thousand angry Mussalmans, according to Pir Kamal, marched to the Town Hall. The request of the Deputy Commissioner that a small party from among the assembly should see him in the Town Hall was rejected and he was compelled to face the vast crowd outside. He yielded to the demand and the elated crowd dispersed.

The Hindus had become nervóus through fright during the preceding week. On the 6th of September they sent a letter to the Deputy Commissioner informing him of the prevailing excitement among the Mussalmans. But no precautions were taken by him for their safety. They were aware of the proceedings of the meeting during the night of the 8th. They therefore sent in the morning of the 9th telegrams notifying the authorities of their fears and requesting them not to re-arrest Jiwandas. The latter still took no notice. There is a hot dispute as to what the crowd did after dispersal near the Town Hall. The Mussalman version is that the Hindus fired the first shot killing a Mussalman boy and wounding another, that this infuriated the mob resulting in the burning and looting that took place that day. The Hindu version is that the first shot was fired by the Mussalmans, that they, the Hindus, fired afterwards and in self-defence and that the whole of the looting and burning was according to a pre-arranged plan and after pre-arranged signals.

There is no direct evidence on the point and I am unable to reach a definite conclusion. The Mussalmans contend that no damage would have occurred if the Hindus had not fired the first shot. I am unable to accept the contention. In my opinion some damage was bound to be done, whether the Hindus had fired or not.

It is certain to me that Sardar Makhan Singh's suburban residence was burnt and its garden damaged by the crowd before the firing, no matter from which side it was begun. But there is no doubt that the Hindus did fire and kill or wound some Mus-

salmans at some stage or other. My opinion is that the crowd elated by its success dispersed itself in several directions and made hostile demonstrations in front of Hindu houses or shops. I should not be surprised if the Hindus who, as shown above, were already nervous and were expecting trouble, took fright at the demonstration and fired in order to scare away the mob. But such an attitude of resistance would infuriate the Mussalmans who were unused to resistance on the part of Hindus. For as Pir Kamal said, the Frontier Mussalmans regarded themselves as *Nayaks* (protectors) and the Hindus as *Hamsayas* (here meaning protected). The more, therefore, the Hindus showed resistance the greater became the fury of the mob.

To me, then, who fired the first shot has not much significance for the purpose of the distribution of blame. No doubt, if the Hindus had not defended themselves at all or if they had not fired the first shot, assuming that they did, the Mussalman demonstration would have exhausted itself sooner. But such was not to be expected of the Hindus who were in possession of arms and knew more or less indifferently how to use them. Mussalman witnesses questioned Hindu deaths or even injury to Hindus on the 9th. I am, however, certain that several Hindus died or were wounded on the 9th at the hands of the Mussalmans. It is difficult to give the total number. It is a pleasure, however, to note here that some Mussalmans befriended the Hindus and gave them shelter.

It is generally admitted that on the 10th September the Mussalman fury knew no bounds. No doubt highly exaggerated reports of Mussalman deaths at Hindu hands were spread and tribesmen from all parts stole into Kohat by making breaches in the walls and otherwise. Destruction of life and property, in which the constabulary freely partook, which was witnessed by the officials and which they could have prevented, was general. Had not the Hindus been withdrawn from their places and taken to the Cantonment, not many would have lived. Much has been made of the fact that Mussalmans too suffered and that tribesmen, once their passion for looting is let loose, make no distinction between Hindu property and Mussalman property. Whilst this statement is true, I do not believe that the Mussalmans have suffered in any way proportionate to the Hindus. And I must respectfully mention that even some Khilafat volunteers, whose duty it was to protect Hindus and regard them as their own kith and kin, neglected their duty and not only joined in the loot but also took part in the previous incitement.

But the worst is yet to be related. During these days temples including a Gurdwara were damaged and idols broken. There were numerous forced conversions[1], or conversions so-called, i.e., conversions pretended for safety. Two Hindus at least were brutally murdered because they (the one certainly, the other inferentially) would not accept Islam. The so-called conversions are thus described by a Mussalman witness:

> The Hindus came and asked to have their *shikhas*[2] cut and sacred threads destroyed, or the Mussalmans whom they approached for protection said they could be protected only by declaring themselves Mussalmans and removing the signs of Hinduism.

I fear the truth is bitterer than is put here if I am to credit the Hindu version. I must say in fairness to the Mussalman friend that he did not regard these acts as conversions at all. Taking it at its lowest, the performance is humiliating alike for the Mussalmans and the Hindus. It would have redounded to the credit of the Mussalmans concerned, if they had steeled the hearts of the unmanly Hindus and offered them protection in spite of their remaining Hindus and retaining the symbols of Hinduism. The Hindus would have gone down to posterity as martyrs and heroes of whom mankind, let alone Hindus, would have been proud if they had preferred death to denying their faith, albeit outwardly, in order to live.

I must now say a word regarding the Government. The authorities on the spot betrayed callous indifference, incompetence and weakness.

It was an error to have burnt the pamphlet after the offending poem was withdrawn.

It was right to arrest Mr. Jiwandas in the first instance, but it was an error of judgment to have released him before the 11th.

It was criminal to have re-arrested him after release.

It was criminal to have disregarded the warnings given by the Hindus on the 6th September and repeated on the 9th that their lives and property were in danger.

It was criminal not to have offered protection when the riot eventually broke out.

[1] Shaukat Ali in his statement published in *Young India*, 26-3-1925, wrote: "As for the so-called conversions to Islam during the days of the riots, my position is clear. I detest forced conversions. They are against the spirit of Islam. If there were any, they deserve the greatest condemnation. But I am not satisfied that there were."

[2] Tufts of hair

It was inhuman not to have provided the refugees with food after their removal and to have left them to their own resources after their removal to Rawalpindi.

It was a gross neglect of their duty on the part of the Government of India not to have appointed an impartial commission to inquire into the events and the conduct of the officials concerned.

As to the future I am sorry that it is no brighter than the past. It is a matter of great pity that the Muslim Working Committee was not represented at our inquiry. The so-called reconciliation is a reconciliation brought about under threat of prosecution against both. It passes comprehension how a strong Government could be party to such a compromise. If it wanted to avoid prosecutions for fear of another demonstration on the part of the tribesmen, it should have boldly said so and declined to prosecute and then tried to bring about an amicable and honourable settlement between the parties.

The compromise is intrinsically bad, because it makes no provision for restoration of lost and damaged property. It is also bad because it still involves prosecution of Mr. Jiwandas who is being made the scapegoat.

It is therefore necessary, if there is to be real cleansing of hearts and genuine reconciliation, for the Mussalmans to invite the Hindu refugees and give them assurances of protection and help in reinstating their temples and Gurdwaras.

But the most important assurance that should be given is, that in future no conversions are to take place except in the presence of the elders of the communities and except in the cases of those who understand the full meaning of what they are doing; and if such conversions are attempted they should receive no recognition. I would personally like the stopping of all conversions and *shuddhis*. One's faith is a personal matter with oneself. It is open to any person of mature age to change his or her faith when and as often as he or she wishes. But if I could do so, I would stop all propaganda except through one's conduct. Conversion is a matter of heart and reason. An appeal to heart and reason can only be made through conduct. I am unable to conceive genuine conversions on the Frontier where Hindus live purely for purposes of gain and where they, a hopeless minority untrained in the use of arms, live in the midst of an overwhelming majority who are, moreover, by far their superiors in bodily strength and use of arms. The temptation for a weak man in such circumstances to embrace Islam for worldly gain is irresistible.

Whether such assurances are forthcoming or not, whether a genuine change of heart is possible or not, I am quite clear on the course that should be adopted. Whilst this foreign domination is in existence some contact with it somewhere is inevitable. But all voluntary contact must be avoided wherever possible. This is the way to feel independent and to cultivate independence. And when a large number feels independent we are ready for swaraj. I can only suggest solutions of questions in terms of swaraj. I would therefore sacrifice present individual gain for future national gain. Even if Mussalmans refuse to make approaches and even if the Hindus of Kohat may have to lose their all, I should still say that they must not think of returning to Kohat till there is complete reconciliation between them and the Mussalmans, and until they feel that they are able to live at peace with the latter without the protection of the British bayonet. But I know that this is a counsel of perfection and not likely to be followed by the Hindus. Nevertheless, I can tender no other advice. For me it is the only practical advice I can give. And if they cannot appreciate it, they must follow their own inclination. They are the best judges of their own capacity. They were in Kohat not as nationalists. They want to return not as nationalists but for the purpose of regaining their possessions. They will therefore do what to them seems feasible and advantageous. Only they must not try to do two things at a time—to try to follow my advice and at the same time to negotiate with the Government for terms. I know that they are not non-co-operators. They have ever relied upon British help. I can but point out consequences and leave them to choose their course.

My advice to the Mussalmans is equally simple.

There was no cause for offence at the Hindus feeling perturbed at the so-called conversions or Hindu husbands taking means to regain lost wives.

I know that in spite of the discharge of Sardar Makhan Singh's son upon the charge of abduction, many Mussalmans continue to believe in the guilt of the Sardar's son. But assuming the guilt of the young Sardar, his crime was no warrant for the fearful vengeance wreaked upon a whole community.

The importation of the pamphlet containing the highly offensive poem was undoubtedly bad, especially in a place like Kohat. But the Sabha made enough reparation by its apology. It was, however, held insufficient by the Mussalmans, and the Sanatan Sabha was compelled to make further reparation by the burning of the copies of the whole pamphlet including the por-

trait of Shri Krishna. Everything done thereafter to the Hindus was far in excess of the requirements. As I have said before, I am not sure who fired the first shot; but assuming that the Hindus did it, it was done in panic and in self-protection and therefore excusable even if not justifiable, and that the reprisals taken were wholly unwarranted. Therefore it is the Mussalmans who owe them such reparation as is possible in the circumstances. They, the Mussalmans, need no Government protection or aid against the Hindus. The latter can do them no harm even if they wished. But here again I am on unsafe ground. I do not possess even the honour of an acquaintance with the present advisers of the Mussalmans of Kohat. They must therefore be the best judges of what is good for the Mussalmans and good for India.

If both the parties desire Government intervention my services are perfectly useless as I do not believe in the desirability of seeking such intervention and I could take no part in any negotiations with the Government. Whilst the Hindus are entitled to and must claim fair treatment from the Mussalmans, both need to protect themselves against the Government whose policy it is to set the one against the other. The Frontier is a non-regulation province where the will of an official is the law. It should be the pride of the Hindus and the Mussalmans to co-operate with one another to achieve full representative government. Such cannot be the case unless the two communities can trust one another and the desire is common to both.

M. K. GANDHI

Young India, 26-3-1925

191 SPEECH IN REPLY TO RAILWAY LABOURERS' ADDRESS, PODANUR

March 19, 1925

Mahatmaji in reply said he was pleased to hear that all races were living together in perfect amity and goodwill and that they had no problem of untouchability or Hindu-Muslim problem. He exhorted the labourers to spin half an hour daily for the sake of the country and wear khaddar. If Maulana Shaukat Ali had been with him, he would have been glad to hear that there was no inter-communal strife among the labourers. Concluding, Mahatmaji advised the labourers to eradicate the drink evil.

The Hindu, 19-3-1925

192. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, TIRUPUR

March 19, 1925

FRIENDS,

I am very much obliged to you for all these addresses. I am sorry that the last address from my Mussalman friends I have not been able to understand for want of translation, but I presume that it contains very much the same sentiments that are contained in the other addresses. You will share my sorrow that this time the Ali Brothers or one of them is not with me; owing to their preoccupations in Delhi and Bombay, it was not possible for any of them to accompany me.

The municipal address calls this the khaddar capital and calls me the khaddar king. I am certainly flattered by the description given to me, and I do feel that if any place can be khaddar capital, Tirupur certainly deserves to be so called, but I am quite aware of my limitations. I realize what a poor khaddar king I must be. (Laughter.) For this khaddar capital shows no more than ten thousand spinning-wheels and one thousand looms. The sales do not amount to more than three lakhs and a half or thereabouts. When you realize what a khaddar king aspires after, you will realize what humility must cover him when he hears of these figures. I was told that although this district was capable of producing 50 lakhs worth of khaddar per year, this district could not be made to use more than ten per cent of khaddar and when I look about me in this meeting, you men and women, I realize how true that remark is.

During my visits to the several khaddar stores in this town I was given this book of samples by the Khaddar Board Bhandar. I do not know if all of you know what Tirupur is capable of giving you in the shape of khaddar. You have here different kinds of checks. You have also a variety of colours. All the khaddar is by no means too thick for weaving in this climate. There are women here who are capable of spinning 20 counts and even finer counts. You can see here a variety of chintz also, and you can see spotless white khaddar calico, and those who like borders can also see from that distance a variety of border too. Yard for yard the price of this stuff is no doubt greater than the price of calico from Manchester, Japan or Bombay and

Ahmedabad and when you compare the durability of this khaddar with the durability of the stuff that you get from Manchester, I am sure that you will find this khaddar cheaper than calico. I also present you with the universal experience of those who are habitually using khaddar that their tastes are so refined and become so simple that their clothing requirements are immediately reduced when they begin to use khaddar, and what is more, do you not owe it to those poor men and women who are living in this district that even though their wares may be a little dearer than what may be sent to you from Manchester or Japan, or even Bombay and Ahmedabad, you should prefer your wares to those foreign wares? Your love of the country must be of an indifferent character if you neglect your neighbours, though all are your neighbours, [for] your distant neighbours of the Punjab, even though the Punjab may be in India. If everyone of you will look after his or her immediate neighbours, you will realize that there will be no difficulty and there will be no distress in India. All of you are agreed that this message of khaddar is an inestimable message. I therefore ask every one of you to immediately adopt khaddar if you have not done so already; and I ask you also to reinstate the spinning-wheel in every home here, for unless hundreds and thousands take to voluntary spinning, it will not be possible for us to reach that fineness in yarn which we want to realize, and unless we take to voluntary spinning, it will not be possible for us to cheapen khaddar as we are able to, and it was because of the immense possibility of the spinning-wheel that I ventured to suggest to every Congressman that the franchise should include the spinning test. I had the pleasure of seeing so many of our sisters at the spinning-wheel today.

I have visited also the weavers of a model village. If you had seen these women working at the spinning-wheel, and if you had seen what happiness the spinning-wheel had brought to their homes, you will soon be converted to the message of khaddar. I understand that for want of your patronage the Khaddar Board is unable to engage thousands of women spinners. I ask the Municipal Councillors, I ask you, the citizens of this place, to visit these centres and realize the truth of what I am saying for yourselves.

I am glad that you are not pestered with the problem of untouchability or unapproachability as some other parts of the South, but I do hope that such untouchability or unapproachability as may still be lurking in our midst will be eradicated without the slightest hesitation. I am convinced this is no part of Hinduism.

The third thing, I have said times without number, is Hindu-Muslim unity. It is impossible to reach the fullest height that this nation is capable of unless we realize the value of the unity of all the races living in our midst. And the fourth is temperance. Throughout my wanderings in Cochin and Travancore, it was pressed upon me that the drink evil was destroying many a home. If the population in this district is given to the drink habit, I hope you will tackle that problem also. (Loud and continued cheers.)

The Hindu, 20-3-1925

193. SPEECH AT VILLAGERS' MEETING, PUDUPALAYAM

March 21, 1925

FRIENDS,

It gives me very great pleasure to be able to meet you all in this out-of-the-way place, and on seeing the musical instruments here, I wished to hear some of your songs in your own natural way. I know that songs play an important part in the development of national life. But there is song and song and there is all the difference between different varieties. There is song that ennobles and there is song that degrades; and when you get a real, good song full of devotion and fervour, it ennobles. Such are some of our old songs all over India. In days of old, we had our own string instruments, but today the harmonium has displaced those noble instruments. I wish that we could revert to the stringed instruments. They produce a deeper melody and so far as I am concerned they have a far more soothing effect on me than a harmonium.

When I look at all of you and all these sisters who have come here, I find the majority of them have foreign cloth on. Now I would like you for a few minutes to consider what the wearing of foreign cloth means. Not more than a hundred years ago, every one of our ancestors—men and women—had a spinning-wheel in their homes. And just as today we have got a kitchen and a cooking stove in every house, so had we a spinning-wheel in every house at which the women spun. The village weavers wove the yarn that our sisters spun; and we clothed ourselves that way. Now if everyone spends for himself, say, Rs. 8 per year, for his clothing and supposing this village had a population of 5,000, we would have saved Rs. 40,000 a year.

Today we are sending nearly Rs. 40,000 from our own village to Manchester or to Japan or to Bombay. In every case it is bad.

In ancient times, we were doing what was right and what was good for our country and which kept our country away from hunger. Now we have changed it; the result is, when there is famine here we do not know what to do. I would like you, therefore, everyone to take a vow never henceforth to wear anything but khadi—hand-spun and hand-woven.

I would ask you also, those of you who have not already introduced a spinning-wheel in your homes, to do so. That will be our *Kamadhenu*. I observe with the greatest pleasure, our friend Mr. Ratnasabhapathy Gounder[1] has introduced not one but many spinning-wheels in his family. It was for me a noble sight to see the ladies of his household spinning away, when I had the pleasure of visiting his house yesterday. He has his cloth woven out of the yarn thus spun. He and his people were clothed in khaddar from top to toe. God has given him plenty of money and it was not for the sake of money he took up the spinning-wheel and wears khaddar. But he has done it for the sake of his country and for the sake of his religion. But we who are poor should do the thing for our own sake.

Now a gentleman has given me some money to buy food and distribute it among the poor. I do not believe in distribution of food among even the poorest of men, if they have strong arms wherewith to earn their living. Nor do I believe in distributing robes when the people can work for them. In my opinion, our rich men practise wrong philanthropy when they indiscriminately distribute money among poor people, by which they merely want to please their fancy. Such charity is to be reserved only for those who are disabled, who are lame or blind or otherwise incapable of doing work.

Therefore, in consultation with Sjt. C. Rajagopalachariar, I have come to the conclusion that this money might be used for distributing cloth to the poor people in this village or in this audience, at a rate lower than the bazaar rate. Ordinarily, I must confess that yard for yard, the khaddar we can produce today is dearer than the cloth sold in the bazaar; and many poor people tell me that they would gladly wear khaddar if it is sold at the same rate as in the bazaar. Therefore, I make

[1] Mittadar (zemindar) of Pudupalayam

this offer to you that those of you who are really poor and cannot pay much money, will register their names and take a promise that they would henceforth wear khaddar only and they will be supplied with khaddar at a cheaper price than in the bazaar. And if there are more poor people here than can be supplied by the donation now on hand, I will see to it that I get a bigger donation, provided all of you present here, promise to wear khaddar only. Now, that is the good thing we have given up, but which we must now restore. And I must talk to you about the bad thing we are refusing to give up.

That bad thing is untouchability. It is one of the greatest curses which is damaging our country and our religion. Claiming to be a *sanatani* Hindu, I tell you our religion does not countenance untouchability as we practise it today. Untouchability I hold is a sin, if *Bhagavad Gita* is one of our Divine Books. There are only four *varnas* or castes, not five. There are undoubtedly some verses in the *smritis*[1], which refer to untouchability, but not to the untouchability of today. That untouchability is applicable to certain occupations and certain states—temporary states. When my mother or sister or wife has the monthly sickness, I may not touch her while the sickness lasts. When my mother cleans her other smaller children, she is an untouchable till she bathes; and so is the scavenger who cleans my closet an untouchable until he has cleaned himself after cleaning the closet. Untouchability is a temporary state to be practised only in connection with such occupations which involve dirty work. But it is a crime and a sin to regard a person as untouchable because he is born in a particular community. And after all, what the Shastras require of you and me is that we should bathe when we touch a particular person. But the untouchability of today has degraded a fifth of the race. It carries with it the suppression of our own countrymen. It has set up a system of superiority and inferiority. The so-called caste Hindus, Brahmins and non-Brahmins, treat the untouchables, the *Panchama*[2] caste, with contempt and derision. They sinfully give them bad, dirty food. They sinfully refuse to let them use public roads. They sinfully degrade them in every way imaginable.

I venture to say that there is absolutely no warrant in our scriptures for such inhuman treatment of our fellow-beings. It is

[1] *Smriti* means, literally, that which is remembered; a class of Hindu religious literature consisting particularly of law books

[2] Literally, belonging to the fifth class, traditionally regarded as untouchables

contrary to humanity, it is contrary to the religion we profess —the religion of ahimsa—to say that caste Hindus may not serve an untouchable who is bitten by a snake or scorpion. On the contrary, my religion, the Hindu religion, teaches me that if I see my son and an untouchable side by side bit by a snake and I am given the option of saving first the untouchable or my son, it is my bounden duty to save the untouchable in preference to my son. God will never forgive me if I forsake that untouchable boy. There is no other way of self-realization, except the way of complete self-abandonment. I ask you, therefore, to shed this bad habit, no matter for how many years we have been practising it.

The third thing is the drink curse. I know that many in this southern Presidency are given to this drink habit. Everyone in this, who is given to the drink habit, will, I hope, give it up completely. Drink makes a man forget himself. He ceases to be a man for the time being. He becomes less than a beast. He loses control over his tongue and every other limb. It never does the slightest good. I hope, therefore, that you will combat the drink evil with all your strength.

Now it is in order to combat the disease of untouchability and the disease of drink and in order to introduce people to take to khaddar and to the spinning-wheel that Sjt. C. Rajagopalachariar has planted himself in your midst.

He has a band of able, intelligent, self-sacrificing, young men to assist him. Sjt. Gounder has placed at his disposal his beautiful garden. They have left, all of them, their remunerative callings and have come in order to serve you. Already, within a few months' time, hundreds of spinning-wheels have been revived. Several hundreds of women are receiving cotton from week to week. They turn it into yarn and bring it from week to week and take away money for their yarn. That yarn is woven and is at your disposal in the shape of khadi. But he and the few men he has, cannot render you much assistance unless you co-operate with him. This is a poor district suffering from famine for the last three or four years and I assure you that there is no insurance so effective as the spinning-wheel against famine.

And you can help in a variety of ways. Those of you who are fairly well-to-do and cannot spare much money can spare half an hour daily to spinning. You can learn carding and spinning at the Ashram here, take sufficient cotton from week to week, turn it into yarn and deliver that yarn free to the Ashram. That will enable Sjt. Rajagopalachariar to sell khadi at a lower cost than

today. Those of you who cannot afford to give cotton may give cash. The Ashram is public property. You have a right to see it at any time you like. It is in your midst. And so long as you find that its activity is a helpful activity and serves your district, it is your bounden duty to help it in every way.

After the close of the address, Sjt. Rajagopalachariar invited the poor, who promised to boycott foreign cloth and wear only khaddar, to register their names at the Ashram, when they would be supplied with khaddar at a price cheaper than the bazaar price of mill-cloth.

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

194. SPEECH AT ASHRAM, PUDUPALAYAM[1]

March 21, 1925

I have read the translation of the address very carefully. Naturally my sympathies are entirely with you. It was at Cocanada that for the first time I came into touch with this class of people and ever since that time, I have been deeply interested in their problems and difficulties. It is a very horrible thing what we are practising everyday in the name of religion. I agree that it is very difficult to solve the problem so long as there are men who are willing to tamper with the chastity of women and so long as there are women ready to sell away their honour for the sake of money. So long as there are such people, so long will this go on. But one thing we can do is to bring discredit on this profession and destroy the air of respectability which it now has. We must rob it of every vestige of respectability. That we shall do by mercilessly condemning the custom.

I would advise you to take census of every family in which the custom of setting apart a girl for prostitution exists. We must persuade these people to consider such a course as absolutely wrong. Secondly, we must take up the case of these unfortunate women and find them suitable employment. I discussed this matter for over two hours with such classes of women in Barisal, Bengal.[2] The income of these women is large; we cannot promise them the same income in their alternative professions as they are getting

[1] In reply to a welcome address presented in Tamil by the members of the Coimbatore District Sengunthar Mahajana Sangham who had specially come for the purpose

[2] *Vide* Vol. XXI, pp. 92-5.

from their sinful practice; nor would they require such an income if they lead a reformed life. Spinning may not secure a living for them. They could take to it only as a recreation, as a sacrificial practice. I place it before them only as purification. But other occupations can be found for them which they can easily learn and follow. There is weaving, tailoring or fancy-work on khaddar. Some Parsi women have taken to fancy weaving. There is also lace-work, embroidery and other handicrafts which can easily yield them an income of three quarter of a rupee to one and a half rupees per day. The *Devadasi*[1] class being small, it must not be a difficult matter to find five or six handicrafts for them. We require men and women—preferably women who have been trained in these handicrafts and lead a pure life—to take up this cause of reformation of their fallen sisters. You may also study and copy the institutions with similar objects working in other places. There should be a specialist to devote his life to this noble work of reclamation.

After the close of the reply, there was an interesting incident when Mahatmaji solicited and got the earrings and finger-ring of Lakshmana Mudaliar for public work and presented them back to Mr. Lakshmana Mudaliar himself to form the nucleus of a fund to be raised and devoted for the reform of the *Devadasis*.

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

195. *SPEECH IN REPLY TO WELCOME ADDRESSES, TIRUCHENGODE*[2]

March 21, 1925

FRIENDS,

I thank you for all these addresses. I note that you endorse my activities in connection with khaddar. The more I think of the possibilities of the spinning-wheel and khadi, the more certain I feel that it is the only thing which can solve the problem of the deep distress which has overtaken our land. And as I saw this morning at the Ashram, old women and old men streaming in, and as I saw old women being served with cotton, I felt millions of

[1] Literally, servant of God; a female dancer attached to a temple

[2] Presented by members of the Tiruchengode Union, the local Congress Committee and Valiba Swarajya Sangam. The speech was translated by Dr. T. S. S. Rajan.

men and women like this had and could have no other occupation than the spinning-wheel. If it were not for our self-satisfaction with our own lot and happiness so called, the contemplation of the pauperism of India would make life a terrible burden to us. Just picture to ourselves an India with a whole one-tenth of her population living on merely one meal a day, living on a bread and a pinch of salt, and you will have some conception of the poverty prevailing in India. It is not a picture drawn from my imagination but it is a statement based on facts collected by the inexhaustible energy of the Grand Old Man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji. It was he who first introduced us to the statistics that were prepared by English administrators and from these statistics he showed that India was daily growing poorer and poorer.

Now, the remedy for removing the distress lies in our own hands. We are responsible for the distress. We gave up the use of cloth that was woven by our own weavers out of yarn spun by millions of our own sisters. We chose to adopt the calico from Manchester, Japan and lately from Bombay and Ahmedabad. And in doing so, we did not care a straw as to what happened to our own neighbours. We did not stop to think that the use of calico from mills, no matter where they were situated, deprived the poor labourers who were devoted to agriculture of the profit they received from working during their spare hours. It was a crime for which we have paid heavily and we are still paying heavily. But happily it is not yet too late. If only we will cease to be callous and indifferent to the sufferings of our own countrymen and countrywomen, we can adopt the remedy today and help to remove the poverty from our land.

I have been visiting the khaddar centres in the South and I have been told that if the people of this Presidency were to patronize or rather do their duty by the people by buying khaddar, thousands of these men and women would get a few coppers more into their pockets. Everywhere they complain they are obliged to turn away the women that flock to them for cotton because they are unable to sell all the khaddar they produce. I plead with you, therefore, every one of the men and every one of the women who are able to hear my voice, that you would speedily remove all the mill-made cloth you wear and put on khaddar which will help your poor sisters and brothers. It is the highest service you can render to your motherland. If you will only be good enough to be satisfied with the khaddar produced here, you will be able to serve your country and in order that we can reach the fineness of yarn which is necessary to produce fine khaddar and in order

that we can issue khaddar to rich and poor at cheap rates almost comparable to Manchester cloth, I would request you to devote half-an-hour daily to the spinning-wheel. It is an incredibly simple and certain solution of the problem which has been engaging the attention of the best of our countrymen for a generation. You are unable now to complain of want of means to learn spinning or secure khaddar. You have now in your midst an Ashram established which is devoting the whole of the energy of some of the best of the youth of our country to the propagation of khaddar. You have but to walk there and you can have your spinning lessons for nothing, you can have good spinning-wheels and you can have khaddar to your heart's satisfaction.

Equally important is the question of untouchability if we are to serve our religion. I am not tired of repeating that untouchability is a curse. As we practise it today, it has no warrant in our scriptures. It is contrary to humanity and reason. It is a denial of God. God never made man that he may consider another man as an untouchable. I do not ask you to dine with anybody, I do not ask you to give your daughters to anybody you do not like, but I do ask you not to treat anybody as untouchable merely because he is born in a particular community. God will cease to be God if he brought to being a single person with the hall-mark of inferiority. Go to the Ashram, look at the *Panchama* boys who are brought up there and I defy you to be able to distinguish between the *Panchama* boys and other Brahmin or caste Hindu boys there. A little touch of kindness, a little touch of humanity and love has made them one flesh with everyone else in that Ashram. They are as intelligent, as attentive and as lovable as any single one in the Ashram. They are as clean and as godfearing as the highest Brahmin in the Ashram. Let us therefore shed our arrogance and save Hinduism from the destination that is impending, if we do not take warning betimes.

The problem of drink is another problem which awaits instant solution. It is destroying many a home and I hope those of you who are patriotic, who consider yourselves as servants of the country, will bestir themselves and go into the midst of those given to the drink evil and try to convert them. Copy the noble example of Mr. Ratnasabhapathy Gounder and do what he is doing in order to save the country from being ruined by the drink curse. It gave me joy and comfort to find his cousin brother only a few months ago making a solemn vow to me that he would throw himself heart and soul into temperance and khaddar work. It gave me the greatest joy to see his wife spinning away at the wheel. She

needed no money. She spins for the sake of the country. But I ask every man and woman to spin from today.

I thank you once more for your address and I hope you will bear what I have ventured to say in mind and carry out these three things as best as you can.

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

196. WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WHERE LIQUOR IS BEING SERVED?

A gentleman asks in sorrow:[1]

I am not aware of liquor having been served at the garden party. However, I would have attended it even if I had known it. A banquet was held on the same day. I attended it even though liquor was served there. I was not going to eat anything at either of these two functions. At the dinner a lady was sitting on one side and a gentleman on the other side of me. After the lady had helped herself with the bottle it would come to me. It would have to pass me in order to reach the gentleman. It was my duty to pass it on to the latter. I deliberately performed my duty. I could have easily refused to pass it saying that I would not touch a bottle of liquor. This, however, I considered to be improper.

Two questions arise now. Is it proper or persons like me to go where drinks are served? If the answer is in the affirmative, is it proper to pass a bottle of liquor from one person to another? So far as I am concerned the answer to both the questions is in the affirmative. It could be otherwise in the case of others. In such matters, I know of no royal road and, if there were any, it would be that one should altogether shun such parties and dinners. If we impose any restrictions with regard to liquor, why not impose them with regard to meat, etc.? If we do so with the latter, why not with regard to other items which we regard as uneatable? Hence if we look upon attending such parties as harmful in certain circumstances, the best way seems to give up going to all such parties.

Why then did I go? Because I have been doing so for many years now and there was no special reason for not doing so on this occasion. On such occasions I myself eat nothing or only

[1] The letter is not translated here. It referred to a garden party given by the Thakore Saheb of Rajkot on February 17, "where drinks were served".

fruit, hence I could satisfy my conscience that the part I had taken did not involve any impropriety. I know that my participation in this manner has resulted in some persons giving up liquor and some others giving up meat. This, however, cannot be an argument in favour of attending such parties. I am stating how I satisfied my own conscience. I would not be worried in the least if others act exactly as I do. However, I am aware that, in following my example, others would not merely attend but also run the risk of not discriminating between what should be eaten or drunk and what should not. I even know that this has actually happened. Moreover, a third question arises, viz., how long should we be held back by such fears? In brief, such questions are always most difficult. Discretion should be used by each person in finding an answer for himself. My advice is that in such matters where one cannot see one single way that is to be followed and where action contrary to mine is also proper, the best course for anyone who is ready to act as I advise, is to do as I ask him, disregarding what I myself do. There is danger in imitating my acts. Hence it is advisable that people do not go to places where drinks and meat are served, despite the fact that I do so.

There is no connection between my insistence on khadi and my going to a place where liquor was served. It is not a fact that I do not go to any place where khadi is not worn. I am firm with regard to the use of khadi at meetings or organizations over which I exercise control or where my firmness is not misunderstood. In the durbar at Rajkot, not everyone was clad in khadi; nevertheless I went there. I do not like attending marriages and such other functions. Hence, when anyone insists on my attending them, if possible I put down the wearing of khadi clothes as a condition.

All these are questions which involve discrimination and love. A thing may be proper on one occasion and improper on another. Man is a living being and not an inanimate object like a machine. Hence, among human beings and in the acts of every one of them, there is variation, novelty, apparent contradiction, etc. However, under the divine guidance of truth and love a discriminating observer could not but perceive identity in difference, harmony amidst discord and unity in diversity. Love without tolerance is not worth the name. I acquire the right to plead courteously with a Muslim not to slaughter the sacred cow by tolerating such slaughter to begin with. I acquired the right to bring up courteously the subject of prohibition at the Thakore Saheb's gathering by suffering drinks being served there. Would the Thakore Saheb prevent me

from bringing up this subject even if I did not attend his party? Someone may ask this question. The answer is that Thakore Saheb would listen to me because he is polite, but while listening to me he would hardly pay any attention to the subject. However, if I talk of prohibition in spite of having attended his reception, he would give careful consideration to what I say and would not let my tolerance go in vain.

In conclusion, I should say once again that imitating me in this matter may be dangerous. Hence those associating with me should beware of such imitation.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 22-3-1925

197. A TEACHER'S PROBLEM

Khadi is compulsory in schools because its propagation is indispensable for swaraj. A teacher argues as follows against such compulsion.[1]

> 1. A child being attracted by the colourful foreign clothes of the other members of the family and neighbours accepts khadi as something that is being thrust upon him and, in this way, he learns to practise deceit from his childhood. If you claim that such a child would naturally choose khadi in a school where a majority of pupils wear it, rather than make it detested by making it compulsory. . . it would be better to let the child be attracted to khadi naturally after it is admitted to the school and allowing some time for the process.

The word "compulsory" has been misconstrued here. If attending a national school was compulsory and then the rule of wearing khadi was compulsory, perhaps it could be said that khadi was made compulsory in an improper way. I use the word "perhaps" here because even when education becomes compulsory, certain conditions will still be there for admission. It is difficult to say that such compulsion is necessarily improper. Certain subjects will be compulsory for the pupils. Moreover, it will also be required that they should be clean when they come to school, should not wear dirty clothes, nor come naked or with gay, multicoloured clothes. Just because these are compulsory requirements, would anyone dare to say that they are improper?

[1] The arguments are summarized here.

I have the feeling that the question of compulsion and option arises only in the minds of those who are not firmly convinced about the necessity of khadi. Whether parents approve of it or not, whether the attitude of neighbours is favourable or not, still we cannot but exercise control over children in some matters. For instance, we shall have to clothe a naked child coming from the jungles. Afterwards, when it returns home, it may revert to its naked state. If the child uses foul language, we shall have to stop it from doing so. Every teacher would impose many such unavoidable restrictions, and, none of the arguments of the above-mentioned teacher will hold good against them.

It is not a fact that wearing khadi had to be made compulsory because we did not succeed in making pupils wear it voluntarily. It is because some persons like me think that the necessary atmosphere has now been created for making khadi compulsory, that spinning and khadi are being made compulsory in national schools. Very often society accepts compulsion because although the spirit is willing, the flesh resists. Hence, many difficulties will be solved if we understand the meaning of the word "compulsory". Compulsion is that which the rulers by virtue of their authority enforce on subjects in the teeth of opposition and under threat of punishment. If this definition is accepted, there is no basis for the issue that the teacher has raised.

> 2. Khadi which is worn with understanding, love and in a spirit of rivalary will be worn for a greater length of time. . . . Does the method of being patient for a few days rather than making the wearing of khadi compulsory on the first day serve the original purpose any the less?

Understanding, love and rivalry are necessarily involved in our compulsory use of khadi. The burden of making it compulsory lies on the teacher, not on the children. The former will not order them like a policeman, but use whatever skill he has in order to win over the hearts of the children. We are not talking of making them wear khadi on the very first day but of making them wear it after four years [since the establishment of national schools]. The word "compulsory" or "obligatory" governs the action of the teacher. It draws the latter's attention to his obligation. Hence the question does not even arise whether the method of being patient is more or less conducive to the original purpose. Patience is, or at any rate should be, the quality of a teacher.

> 3. The rule making khadi compulsory proclaims that its voluntary spread was unsuccessful. .

This doubt has been resolved above.

4. Will there not be an increase in the number of hypocrites because of this rule of compulsion? . . .

If the fear of hypocrisy is with reference to children, I do not recognize it. Children are not hypocrites. If it is in relation to teachers, the possibility may be there. However, an element of hypocrisy comes in wherever a rule is observed with some vigour.

The remedy for this lies in purifying the atmosphere, not in making the rules flexible.

5. Because of compulsory khadi, national schools would be only for those who have fulfilled the conditions for swaraj; what schools are there for those who have yet to be trained? . . .

There are two reasons for founding national schools. In the first place, it is to provide facilities for those who have been imbued with the spirit of nationalism, and secondly, in order to inspire others by serving as models. The purpose could not possibly be to mislead the latter by diluting the ideal of nationalism. Gradually, as the character of the teachers and pupils in the national schools is formed and becomes apparent, others will not be able to resist the temptation of joining these schools.

6. Rules become a snare. . . .

Whether rules become snares or not depends on those who impose them. Even their voluntary observance depends on the rule-maker. Primary schools are like tender branches and they can be bent as we wish. Let us, however, decide to keep them straight.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 22-3-1925

198. MY NOTES

Cruelty

I write these notes in Travancore-Cochin. Among many beautiful things that I saw, I cannot forget an intolerable scene that I witnessed on my way to the motor boat for Vykom. The people of Cochin make very little use of horse-drawn carriages and motor cars, but in their place they use human beings. The Japanese type rickshaw is seen everywhere. The sight of rickshaws did not pain me much, as I had seen them often in Durban. However, when I saw three or four persons huddled together in one rickshaw, I felt like getting down from my carriage and going over to help that rickshaw-puller. I was to reach a destination and could not get down. The wound it inflicted on my mind, however, did not heal. This rickshaw is so built that only one person can sit in it. It is also true that so many persons cannot be huddled in it if the puller protests. The cruelty of the passengers, however, is not the less for that. A human being does a thousand wrong things because of poverty. He even crawls on his stomach, performs many base acts. However, what is to be said of those who witness these things? What of those who compel him to do them? There may even be a law in Cochin that not more than one person can ride in a rickshaw. If this is so, those who thus overload it are doubly guilty. There is a large population of Gujaratis in Cochin; they are influential people. The persons that I saw huddled in the rickshaw were Malayalis. I do not know whether Gujaratis go to this extreme or not. I hope, however, that no Gujarati is so cruel. I would like to request them to serve Cochin. They should educate public opinion there so that no one would misuse rickshaws. I would even advise them to give up using rickshaws. This, by giving them some exercise, would improve their health. Except in case of illness or disability, it seems sinful for a person to be carried by another. How can we put human beings to the same use as animals? How can we make others do what we are not prepared to do ourselves?

A Husband's Duty

A gentleman asks what a husband should do if his wife does not assist him in practising the dharma of self-control. My experience tells me that one does not require the consent of the other partner

in practising self-control. It is enjoyment that requires consent. Renunciation is everyone's prerogative. In these matters, however, a great deal of discrimination is required. Self-control should be genuine. The man should carefully observe his own feelings. He can persuade the wife to accept his idea through gentleness and pure love. It is possible that the wife is not as enlightened as the husband. If so, it is his dharma to share his knowledge with her. There is no difficulty in practising self-control where there is such wisdom in family relationships. It is my experience that the woman is the first to practise self-control. It is the husband who prevents her from doing so. Hence this question appears irrelevant to me; nevertheless, I have answered it with some hesitation because I feel that it required to be answered.

Difference between Father and Son

The father is rich and pleasure-loving, while the son loves renunciation and a simple life. The father stands in the way. What should the son do? In my humble opinion, the son should not give up his desire for renunciation. He should try and gently plead with his father. I believe that, where the son is both courteous and firm, the father does not interfere. Very often the son becomes arrogant and annoys the father by making even renunciation look like indulgence. I do not regard such renunciation as worthy of the name. In its pure form there is so much humility that the father is not even aware of the renunciation. There is no need to make much fuss about it. Renunciation which is natural does not herald its coming by the blowing of trumpets. It comes in imperceptibly without letting anyone notice it. Such renunciation is worthy of its name and enduring. No one considers it excessive and it is infectious.

Teacher for Untouchables

The answer to this question[1] is simple. If teachers for the other castes could be engaged at a salary of Rs. 60/- to Rs. 75/-, they could also be so engaged for the untouchables. Much, however, depends on the character of the teacher. I do not think that one deserves this salary only because one has graduated from the Vidyapith. I would wish all of them to be men of character. I know, however, that this is not so. Besides weaving, etc., *Antyajas* could also be trained in carpentry or other crafts. However, I would, if possible, develop weaving more. Many *Antyajas* do

[1] The question is not translated here.

weaving. A great deal of time may have to be spent in teaching them the finer points of the art. The *Antyaja* weavers do not weave fine yarn in much quantity, they do not even weave broadcloth, they hardly weave any designs. Our task is to give them complete training in the art of weaving. We do not have the means to do so as our knowledge does not extend so far. Because of this shortcoming on our part, we should not put them to the trouble of learning other crafts, but we should overcome our own shortcoming. The latter is the real tragedy. We are aware of what we should teach but we have not yet acquired the fitness to do so.

I see difficulties in immediately introducing any formula about the teacher-pupil ratio in national schools. In ideal schools, the number of teachers will certainly be large. Some time will elapse before students fill them up. Until such time, we cannot fix the ratio.

Our Limitations

The same teacher writes to ask:[1]

If the Indian Princes entrust the education department to us we should certainly take it over, but we must lay down our conditions in doing so. Our rules regarding khadi, spinning, etc., must be accepted there. We should regard as untouchable a department which shuns *Antyajas*. If we take over the management of such departments hoping to introduce our reforms gradually, we shall be swallowed up by them. It becomes very difficult to renounce something that has been accepted. Not for a moment can we afford to be indifferent to the rules which we regard as essential.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 22-3-1925

[1] The letter is not translated here.

199. LETTER TO KUNVERJI KHETSI

Phagan Vad 13 [March 22, 1925][1]

CHI. KUNVERJI,

I have your letters. I have ceased worrying about Chi. Rami[2] after giving her to you [in marriage]. I have full trust in you. Diseases cling to the body. They will come and go. After your letter there was one from Chi. Bali[3] which gave the news that she [Rami] was much better. Require Rami to do physical work according to her capacity. That would keep her fit. I shall reach the Ashram on the 27th. Ask Rami to write to me.

Blessings from
BAPU

CHI. KUNVERJI KHETSI
C/O GOKALDAS TRIBHUVAN PAREKH
MORVI, KATHIAWAR

From a copy of the Gujarati original: C.W. 6108. Courtesy: Navajivan Trust

200. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Phalgun Krishna 13 [March 22, 1925][4]

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your two letters.

You have taken a load of worry off my mind concerning the Muslim University. I would certainly not wish your donation to be the cause of dispute among your brothers. I shall not disclose your name.

As for the land acquired by you in Chhota Nagpur, I will not advise you to give it up just because of the death of some of your

[1] Gandhiji reached the Ashram on 27th March 1925 after his tour of Vykom, Madras and other places.

[2] Daughter of Harilal Gandhi

[3] Sister-in-law of Harilal Gandhi

[4] Gandhiji in his letter dated February 21, 1925, had asked the addressee to donate Rs. 50,000 to the National Muslim University of Aligarh. The addressee agreed to pay the sum and thus relieved Gandhiji of his worry.

employees. There is not much difference between landed property and property in the shape of bullion; and property is bound to lead to quarrels, even murder. There is only one way out of your dilemma: to give up property altogether. This, you do not wish to do at present. But, as I have said, since property becomes the cause of quarrels and tempts us to do wrong things, we should give it up, and so long as we are not ready to renounce it completely, we should, as its trustees, use it for the good of others and make the minimum use of it for our own enjoyment. There is another possibility. Has an attempt been made to get in touch with the gentleman who is creating trouble? Why does he give this trouble? Maybe, it was his foolishness but has his land been acquired for a song? Even a fool would not like to throw away his property. But this is another moral problem I have raised.

Is your wife feeling a little better now?

I shall leave Madras on the 24th.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6107. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

201. SPEECH AT SOCIAL SERVICE LEAGUE, MADRAS[1]

March 22, 1925

It has given me the greatest pleasure to begin this part of my tour in this Presidency with this function. The address that has just been read to me thanks me for accepting this invitation. Your thanks are, however, due not to me a prisoner but my jailor, Mr. S. Srinivasa Iyengar. (Laughter.) It was for him to dispose of the whole of my time in this place. He has to his heart the removal of untouchability as much as any of us. You have remarked upon the apathy of the young generation towards social service. To a certain measure, I endorse it. It is true that the young generation requires excitement rather than work. But let me also inform you that there are hundreds of people not known to the world, not known to fame, who display ability in social service of a character infinitely more difficult than the servicc that you have just now described to me. Here, in Madras,

[1] In reply to its address of welcome

you have the amenities of what is called civilization. (Laughter.) The young men of whom I am talking to you, I have got their names in my mind, have devoted the whole of their time to social service in villages. They are barred from all intercourse with the outside world. They do not see the newspaper. Excitement has no place in their diary. They lived in the midst of people and live the same life they are living. I commend their unknown labour to your attention. Let their service, so whole-hearted and so self-sacrificing, be regarded as a penance for the other part of the young people. And let their self-sacrificing service be also a spur to effort for the rest of the younger generation who have not known what real service is.

In my opinion, in that service lies the best part of our education. I am no enemy of the education that is being imparted in our numerous schools. But in my own scheme of life it occupies but a secondary place. I disregard the value of this education if it does not result in making us servants of the nation. I very much fear that social service that is generally rendered in our towns takes the form, as Gokhale[1] would say, of recreation; whereas, if it should be effective and valuable for the people whom we serve and for the nation, it should be the chief part of our daily business. Social service that savours of patronage is not service.

I sincerely tender my congratulations to you for the great work that you are doing. Only it appears to me to be incomplete and admits of great improvement. In my opinion, regard being had to the conditions of this country, no social service is complete without the foundation of spinning-wheel and khaddar behind it. You may laugh at it, if you wish to. But a time is coming when it will be the fundamental maxim of social service that no social servant would be worthy of his name if he is clad in anything but khaddar and who does not know how to spin. I shall tell you why. You have begun rightly with the service of the lowest strata of society. May I then remind you of the fact, the indisputable fact, that the lowest strata of our society do not live in towns but in villages? May I also inform you of the fact stated not by a man like me but by historians that one-tenth of India's population lives in semi-starvation? And it is also admitted that they do so because for nearly four months in the year they have no occuption. There must be some universal occupation which will be of a universal character. Such an occupation is only the spinning-wheel.

[1] G. K. Gokhale (1866-1915); educationist and statesman

Pray do not consider it in terms of the individual but in terms of the nation. And you will find immediately that the sum total of the savings to the nation amounts, not to a few lakhs, but nearly 120 crores of rupees. It is the one indisputable service which carries its own reward. It is impossible to render this service if we go to the people as their patrons. We can render this service to them; we can ask them to wear khaddar when they see us wearing that khaddar ourselves. The spinning-wheel would fail to attract masses unless we begin today spinning ourselves. And since we have lost the cunning of the wheel, it is impossible for us to take the message of the wheel to them unless we master the science of the wheel and the intricacies of that simple instrument. In that service and that service alone there is no waste of efforts. There is no room for despondency. For just as every blade of grass that is grown by the tiller adds to the wealth of the country, so also every yard of cotton spun in the name of the country adds to the wealth of the country and puts it, even if it is a pie, into the pockets of the starving millions. I, therefore, in all humility, venture to hope that you (addressing Mr. T. V. Seshagiri Iyer, as a leader of this band of workers) will endeavour to study this problem in all its bearings and apply your fine imagination and intellect to the solution of the problem, and I have no doubt that after your studies, you will come to the same conclusion that the great P. C. Ray came to, that there is no salvation for the toiling millions apart from the spinning-wheel.

I am working against time today. My jailor has imposed a heavy programme on me—(Laughter.)—somewhat more exacting than the jailor of Yeravda. There are many branches of social service about which I could talk to you. But I wish to end with merely carrying this message of the spinning-wheel, and I hope that when I have the privilege of meeting you again, I wish to see you all dressed in khaddar, from top to toe. I again tender you my congratulations on the work that has already been done by your league.

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

202. *SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, MADRAS*[1]

March 22, 1925

SISTERS AND FRIENDS,

I am obliged to you for this beautiful address and it gives me very great pleasure to have visited this spinning competition. But I cannot withhold from you the distress I feel that so many of the sisters are not clad in khaddar. You, the women of India, keep in the palm of your hands the destiny of your country. The swaraj of my dream is an impossiblity unless the women of India play their full part side by side with the men. At women's meetings, I have described swaraj as *Ramarajya* and *Ramarajya* is an impossibility unless we have thousands of Sitas. I assure you that in the days of Rama and Sita there was nothing but khaddar, hand-spun and hand-woven. When Sita traversed the length and breadth of India she was not dressed, as you are, in foreign cloth. For Sita, what cloth her country produced was quite enough for her decoration. It was reserved for the modern women of India to tell me that khaddar is too coarse for them. But do you know that by your ceasing to wear khaddar millions of our sisters and brothers have been reduced to poverty? It is all very well for you, who are fairly well-to-do, to attend functions and to go about in saris of 18 cubits. But remember that your sisters in the villages of India have not only no saris such as you have, but have not even enough food to eat. And I am telling God's truth when I say that I have seen hundreds, if not thousands, of women in India who have no clothes to wear but rags.

I, therefore, ask you for the sake of those sisters, for the sake of your religion, and for the sake of God, to throw away all the foreign cloth that you are using and to wear such khaddar saris as you can procure. I ask you that in order that khaddar might be cheap, and in order that you may have as fine saris as you like, to spin for at least half an hour a day and to make a present of these yarns that you may spin, to the country. It will be possible to cheapen khaddar. I hope all of you have seen the sisters spinning in the hall at the back. If you have not done so, I

[1] In reply to an address of welcome (in Tamil) presented by Mrs. Chinnaswami Iyengar. The speech was translated into Tamil, sentence by sentence, by S. Srinivasa Iyengar.

invite you to inspect the spinning in batches of ten at a time. Not very long ago we had in every home a spinning-wheel as we have today in every home a cooking-stove. In removing this spinning-wheel from its place in our home, we have debarred from ourselves at least a quarter of our source of income. I ask you once more to restore the spinning-wheel to its proper place. Your presence here pleases me. But it will soon become painful and intolerable for me to attend such meetings if sisters continue to besiege these meetings dressed in foreign cloth. I have no desire to hear my own voice, and if I still continue to address meetings, it is because I have still a hope lingering in my breast that some words of mine will penetrate the minds of those that I address. May my words uttered this afternoon produce such an effect upon your minds!

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

203. SPEECH AT THE "HINDU" OFFICE, MADRAS[1]

March 22, 1925

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

When I received the invitation to unveil this portrait, in my reply I said that I would feel honoured to perform this ceremony. I feel doubly honoured now, first, because you have given me this privilege of unveiling the portrait of the late Mr. Kasturiranga Iyenger, and secondly, because I am doing it under the chairmanship of one whom I love and respect. It shows great wisdom on the part of those who have issued these invitations, that they confined their attention or invitation to no one party, but to all parties.

I had the privilege of knowing Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar for the first time in 1915, I think, and in those days when I could say I was a fairly regular reader of newspapers which I am not today. (Laughter.) Among the newspapers that I read was certainly *The Hindu* and I came to understand the value of that paper from that very moment. I believe that Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar represented some of the best that is to be found in Indian journalism. He had, I know, a style all his own. He commanded a sarcasm which was also peculiarly his own. Whether he wrote as an opponent or as a friend, you could not fail to admire the style in which

[1] On the occasion of the unveiling of the portrait of S. Kasturiranga Iyengar. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri presided.

he wrote. Sometimes, although the home thrusts that he gave to his opponents felt bitter at the time they were delivered, there appeared always to be a great deal of truth in them because he had a most plausible style. I think it can be fairly claimed for him that he never wavered in his faith in his own country. And although he was always a courteous critic, he was also one of the most fearless critics of the Government.

I had on many an occasion to differ from him. But I always valued his decision because I understood thereby wherein lay the weakness of my argument or my position; because, I cannot recall an occasion when there was not something to be said for the argument that he advanced. Very often it appeared to me that he occupied, if I may take such a parallel, about the same position in this Presidency that the editor of the London *Times* occupies in England (Applause.) and it was in this manner. I never thought that Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar was an out and out reformer but he had cultivated journalism for the sake of journalism as it appeared to him. ("Hear, hear.") He felt that if he was to retain that character, he must not lead the country, at least not lead the country too much, but always accurately reflect its opinion.

Those who followed the columns of *The Hindu* cannot fail to recognize that whenever they saw a change in the editorial policy, it was because with an unerring instinct he recognized which way the country was going or which way the wind was blowing. It may be said that this was a defect in him, but I do not consider it to be so. (Mr. C. R. Reddy: "Hear, hear.") If he had taken upon himself, as I venture to say I have, the role of a reformer, then he would have to give expression to his own individual opinion, no matter what the whole country around him thought of it. I think that also is a phase in the country's life; but that is not the peculiar function of a journalist. A journalist's peculiar function is to read the mind of the country and to give definite and fearless expression to that mind. And I think that Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar was almost unrivalled in this quality of his. (Applause.)

What is more; there was one other thing also I noticed about *The Hindu* and that was that its news columns satisfied the ambition of a most voracious reader ("Hear, hear" and laughter.); because Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar gave everything that was to be given in the shape of the events in the country and he had also cultivated the art—and it is an art as I can tell you from my own experience—of clipping. All his clippings were really admirable; and if a man studied *The Hindu* he would not have to read any other newspaper so far as the news of the world was con-

cerned, because he had a most catholic taste. He went to the whole newspaper world and he made the choicest extracts from all the magazines and all the newspapers and placed them before his readers in an attractive manner. So a man living in the Madras Presidency if he took up *The Hindu*, and as a counterblast, took up the Madras *Mail*, I think he would find that he had all he wanted to know about both sides of the question. That, in my opinion, sums up the journalism of Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar. But when I have said that, I feel that I have paid him all the compliment that I am capable of paying.

I regard *The Hindu* among the very few newspapers, very few daily newspapers—without which really you cannot do ("Hear, hear.") and whose loss will be felt not merely in this side of India, but in the north as well; because although his influence among the reading public of this Presidency is unrivalled, it was no less so among the public workers all over India. They always wanted to know what *The Hindu* had to say upon a particular question. It was, therefore, a matter of very great regret to me to find in the jail that Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar was no more and I always felt that if I had a proper public occasion, I would give expression to my regret publicly, and it gives me much pleasure that I have been given this privilege of paying a humble tribute to the memory of one whom I regarded with the greatest respect although very often he differed from me and never hesitated to express his differences when he considered that it was his duty to do so. He never considered men and their feelings when he felt that he could not help it and when the interests of the country demanded an emphatic expression of his views. Such was Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar.

I have not been able, as I have told you, to follow the newspapers lately for several years; but I have heard the Editor and Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar's son are following closely the policy and the traditions they have inherited from their illustrious chief. I hope that *The Hindu* will prosper. I hope that it will continue to render the same service that Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar for such a long time rendered to the country. Journalism has a distinct place in familiarizing and expressing public opinion. We are yet cultivating or we have yet to cultivate the best of journalism among us. We have many wonderfully able journalists to copy. We have also patriots who lived long ago like Kristodas Pal[1]. When it was difficult to speak or write fearlessly he led public

[1] 1834-1884; editor of *The Hindu Patriot*

opinion and he never hesitated to say what the country wantod or what he himself felt. We have those wonderfully good traditions therefore to follow; yet, from whatever little I know of journalism, I realize that there is still a great deal to be done. In our march towards our goal, I know that journalism will play a most important part in shaping the destinies of our country.

I have, therefore, never been tired of reiterating to journalists whom I know that journalism should never be prostituted for selfish ends or for the sake of merely earning a livelihood or, worse still, for amassing money. Journalism, to be useful and serviceable to the country, will take its definite place only when it becomes unselfish and when it devotes its best for the service of the country and, whatever happens to the editors or to the journal itself, editors would express the views of the country irrespective of consequences. I think that we have in our midst the making of journalism of that character. *The Hindu* is one of those few newspapers which can do so. It has acquired a prestige which is all its own. Let me therefore hope that the present managers and the editorial staff of *The Hindu* will continue to follow the best traditions and may I also add that the best way of glorifying one's inheritance is not merely to keep it intact but to add to it.

I think there is always room for adding; there is always room for new thought and may I hope, therefore, that the editorial staff will recognize that there is a new class of readers rapidly rising in India which requires a different character of thought, a different character of deed, and perhaps even a different character of news. That rising class is derived from the masses. You will perhaps take my evidence when I tell you that throughout all my wanderings I noticed a definite, conscious longing on the part of the masses for something better for our India, for something better for themselves, and if journalists want to penetrate the hearts of these great masses of people of India who have not hitherto been served by journalists, then, I think they will have to strike a different path and a different line also. You will not expect me to say what that line is. If I had my own choice, you know what that line will be or should be. I simply leave these thoughts with you.

With these words, once more, I thank the editor and Mr. Kasturiranga Iyengar's sons for giving me this unique honour—because I regard it as unique honour—of being able to unveil this portrait. (Loud and prolonged applause.)

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

204. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MADRAS[1]

March 22, 1925

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

I am obliged to all the people or associations who have presented these addresses to me. You, Mr. President, have dealt with the Hindu-Muslim question at some length. I endorse the sentiments expressed by you. If the Hindus and Mussalmans do not unite reasonably, they will unite forcibly, because one party cannot lead this country; and so long as there are some Hindus and some Mussalmans with whom unity of all the races is an article of faith, I have every hope that we shall unite and unite whole-heartedly. I for one do not object to the Congress being described as a social organization or a spinning association. For, if we neglect what may be called social and economic matters, it is impossible—he who runs may see—to attain swaraj. But the Congress is also a political organization, in that the Swaraj Party is an integral part of the Congress and the Congress enables you, every one of the Congressmen who wants to realize political ambition, to realize that ambition to the highest degree through the Swaraj Party. But for me, at any rate for the time being, my politics do not go beyond the spinning-wheel. Its revolutions are so rapid and so certain that in their sweep they take in every other activity. It is, together with the unity between all the races and the removal of untouchability, the foundation on which you may erect any political or other national structure. Without the removal of untouchability, any structure you may seek to build will topple like a house on sand. I, therefore, offer no apology for engaging your attention for a while on the Vykom satyagraha.

Those of you who read newspapers have perhaps followed my movement throughout Travancore. I have every hope that, before consolidated and organized public opinion, the wall of prejudice that surrounds orthodoxy will go. I am of opinion that the Government of Travancore is not against reform. Untouchability is a curse which every Hindu is bound to remove at the earliest opportunity. I have seen it in its worst form, not only

[1] In reply to addresses of welcome presented by the Gujarati Sevak Mandir, Amarabala Vilasini Sabha and the Naoroji-Gokhale Union at Tilak Ghat (Triplicane Beach). Yakub Hasan presided.

as unapproachability but also as invisibility. Mere sight of a certain man is considered by blind orthodoxy as a sin. *Nayadis* are expected to remain invisible. I saw two men belonging to that caste in Trichur. Except for the human form I saw nothing of humanness about them. (Laughter.) My friends, it is not a matter for laughter but it is a matter for shedding tears of blood. They had no eyes, but two openings in which eyes might have been if they had been treated as human beings. There was no lustre in their eyes that I see in yours. They were supposed to bring addresses to me, but they had to be lifted up to the carriage and they were holding those addresses in their shaking hands. I tried to wake them up and excite a little bit of cheer in their faces. I failed miserably. They could not hand over the addresses to me. I had to take them from them. They had to be lifted back as they had to be lifted towards me. If we had sufficient imagination and if we had sufficient love for our country or our religion, we would refuse to be satisfied until this curse was blotted out of this land. I reject the Shastras if I am told that the Shastras countenance any such evil. But I am positive, as I am positive that we are sitting here together, that our Shastras enjoin or countenance no such devilry. To say that a single human being, because of his birth, becomes an untouchable, unapproachable or invisible, is to deny God. I, therefore, ask you to support the brave struggle that the satyagrahis are carrying on in Travancore by holding public meetings and by cultivating public opinion in every legitimate manner. If I could, I would organize the Hindu opinion on this one point from the Punjab to Kanyakumari and from Assam to Sind.

A gentleman has just now handed me a note containing some questions on this matter.

I will gladly answer. He asks if the untouchables are allowed the use of roads you would support their further claim to enter Hindu temples like any other Hindu. I am surprised at this question at this time of the day. My answer is emphatically in the affirmative. I claim that to the untouchables, not only public roads should be open but also all temples which are open to non-Brahmins, and all public schools where non-Brahmins and others are admitted and all public places such as public wells or travellers' bungalows, or anything which is supposed to belong to the public at large, should be open to the untouchables as they are to us. Not till this simple, elementary, primary human right is guaranteed to every single human being on this piece of God's earth will I consider that the claim in regard to untouchability is vindicated.

It is not so much a right that belongs to the untouchables as it is the duty which we, the caste Hindus, owe to them. It is the least penance that we owe to the untouchables and to the world at large. But let me not be misunderstood. I do not want at this stage to vindicate the whole of this right by way of satyagraha. Vykom satyagraha will stop immediately the roads in question are thrown open. I recognize that, wrongly though it is, there is opposed to us a tremendous wall of prejudice in connection with temples. I for one would be no party to any violence in any shape or form being used even in order to eradicate this root evil which is eating into the vitals of the Hindu community. But there is no mistaking the fact that it is the bounden duty of every Hindu not to rest satisfied until full right is guaranteed to the untouchables and until the very word "untouchables", or "invisibles" is blotted out of our dictionary.

The friend next asked me for a definition of a *sanatani* Hindu and says: "Could a *sanatani* Hindu Brahmin inter-dine with a Hindu non-Brahmin although the latter may be a non-vegetarian?" My definition of a *sanatani* Brahmin is: He who believes in the fundamental principles of Hinduism is a *sanatani* Hindu. And the fundamental principles of Hinduism are absolute belief in truth (*satya*) and ahimsa (non-violence). The Upanishads proclaim, the *Mahabharata* proclaims from the housetop: "Put in one scale all your *rajasuyas*[1], all your *ashvamedhas*[2] and all your merits and put truth in the other scale, the scale in which truth is thrown will outweigh everything else." Therefore use truth as your anvil, non-violence as your hammer and anything that does not stand the test when it is brought to the anvil of truth and hammered with ahimsa, reject as non-Hindu. For a fuller definition of *sanatani* Hindu I must refer the friends and those who have similar doubts to the pages of *Young India*. I have said repeatedly that inter-dining and intermarriage have no connection whatsoever with the removal of untouchability, for inter-dining or intermarrying is a matter of choice and should be so too with every human being. It is an indulgence, whereas untouchablity is a refusal to serve our fellow-beings. And truth and ahimsa demand that no human being may debar himself from serving any other human being, no matter how sinful he may be.

My friend asks me my views on *varnashramadharma*. I believe in the four *varnas* and the four *ashramas*. We have created confusion

[1] Sacrifices performed at the time of the coronation of Hindu kings in ancient times

[2] Horse sacrifices performed by emperors to establish their supremacy

in these four *varnas* and instead of treating them as we ought to, we have arrogated to ourselves superiority, one over another. And to our humiliation and degradation we have blotted out three *ashramas* and retained an apology for *grihasthashrama*. All the four stages in a man's life are devised by the seers in Hinduism for imposing discipline and self-restraint. *Grihasthashrama* is the fair fruit of *brahmacharya* in life for a series of years. We have grown into the habit of straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. It was the first *ashrama* that gave a stability to Hinduism which has survived many an age and has witnessed the fall of many civilizations and which still remains secure. And if we would resume the other two *ashramas*—*vanaprastha* and sannyasa—and become wholesale national workers devoting our whole time and attention to national service, we would not then have witnessed the farce, the degradation and tragedy of infant marriages and infant widows. And if we but follow *varnashramadharma* in its spirit, we shall cease to be puny individuals and we shall walk in the fear of God and never fear a single human being. Today we are afraid of one another, we are afraid of Mussalmans and we are afraid of Englishmen. We have lost the nerve force that we had inherited from our forefathers and we have become a bundle of nerves.

The friend lastly asks—rather it is the first question—"What is the duty of the voters in the coming elections to the Legislative Council? Do you advise me to abstain from voting?" It is a fall from the sublime to the ridiculous. If I were a voter and if I exercise the right to vote, I shall tell you what I should do. I will first of all scan the candidates from top to bottom and if I find that among all the candidates there is not one man who is dressed from top to toe in khaddar, I will retain my vote in my pocket absolutely sealed. And if I am satisfied that there is at least one man who is dressed from top to toe in khaddar, I will go to him in all humility and ask him if he is dressed in this style for the occasion or if he habitually at home and out of home wears hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. If he returns an answer in the negative, I should again retain my vote in my pocket. I would next ask him: "It is extremely good that you always wear khaddar. Do you also spin for the sake of the masses at least for half an hour?" And if I am entirely satisfied on this question, my next question will be: "Do you believe in Hindu-Muslim-Parsi-Christian-Jewish unity?" And if I am still satisfied with the answer, my next question will be, if he is a Hindu and if there is a general electorate in which I can vote for Hindus, Mussalmans

and others: "Do you believe in the removal of untouchability in the sense in which I have put it before you?" I am an ambitious and a zealous voter. Therefore, I would further ask: "Do you favour temperance reform? And do you favour total immediate prohibition even though everyone of our schools will have to be closed for want of revenue?" And if he says "Yes", I would take heart and immediately ask him a few questions to see that he is as sound on the Brahmin-non-Brahmin question and I shall vote for him. That is what I would do. You may ask fifty other questions. But I would ask you never to be satisfied until you have asked all these questions and added many more.

One word about the thing which is uppermost in my mind at the present moment. There are 10,000 charkhas going on at Tiruppur and 1,000 looms. Over Rs. 3 lakhs are distributed amongst those weavers, weaving sisters of ours. Mr. Santhanam, Tamil Nad Congress Secretary, complains that you do not buy khaddar which is supplied to you and therefore he has to turn away hundreds of women who would gladly spin for 8 hours a day for a few pies. He tells me that it is possible to manufacture khaddar in one year to the extent of Rs. 50 lakhs in that single district. The same thing is true of many other places in the Presidency. Let me throw in the information for doubting non-Brahmins, if there are any, that all these weavers and spinners are non-Brahmins. There is Rs. 75,000 worth of khaddar stored in Tirupur alone. One of your general secretaries, Mr. Bharucha, has come today in order to preach that you should spin and wear khaddar for the sake of your countrymen. With a bundle of khaddar on his shoulder he will move from place to place and from door to door to ask you to engage your attention on behalf of your countrymen. For God's sake do not idle away your time, do not argue whether khaddar can solve this great problem of the rapidly growing pauperism of India. Believe me that in the proper and full solution of that one problem lies the solution of thousands of problems that today defy solution. Do not hesitate to give at least half an hour of your time to spinning in order that khaddar may be cheap for the masses. God willing I hope to return within three months' time. (Cheers.) Do not let me come to witness a tragedy that even during those three months you are no further than you are today. Let me hope and pray you will see to it that the several yards of khaddar now lying in the various national stores will be used up by you and in three months' time you will have so organized yourselves that those who are in charge of khaddar manufacture are never henceforth able to say that they cannot

feed hungry mouths for want of patronage of khaddar. Let it not be said of this great city that it was weighed in the balance and found wanting.

I thank you for the patience with which you have listened to me.

Mahatma Gandhi asked the audience not to leave the meeting until he reached the beach road.

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

205. SPEECH AT STUDENTS' MEETING, MADRAS[1]

March 22, 1925

I am grateful to you for this beautiful address. I have, throughout my wanderings, come across thousands of students representing every variety of opinion. I have had discussion with them on all sorts of matters, not merely political. I carry on constant correspondence with them to the present day and therefore I understand the aspirations of the student world. I realize their difficulties and I know their ambitions. You have asked me not to lose faith in the students. How can I? I have been a student and it was at Madras, I think, at a meeting, that I addressed them as "fellow-students", but that in a different sense. It is true I claim to be a student and, therefore, I can realize my identity with them. A student is a searcher after truth. I do not talk here of the student in the restricted sense, who learns or studies a few books, memorizes some of them, attends lectures and passes the examinations. All that, in my opinion, is the least part of a student's work or a student's duty. But a student is he who continuously uses his faculty of observation, puts two and two together and carves out for himself a path in life. He must first think of duty in life more than of securing rights. If you do your duty, the rights will follow as day follows night. The students should lay greater stress upon this aspect of life than on any other. I have been urging the students all through India that whatever they may do in the colleges and schools, let them not forget that they are the chosen representatives of the nation, that our schools and colleges represent an infinitesimal portion of the youth of the country and that our villagers do not come in contact with the

[1] At the Gokhale Hall where members of the Madras Inter-Hostel Debating Society presented a welcome address

student world at all as education is at present arranged. So long as education remains in that condition, it is, I believe, the duty of the students to understand the mass mind and to serve the masses. In order to serve the masses and to prepare themselves for it, let me recall the beautiful story that Mr. C. F. Andrews wrote for *Young India* about the students of Santiniketan.

Continuing, Mahatmaji next narrated how a batch of students of the Santiniketan Ashram went to some villages near by in order to render service. But this party of students went to the villages as patrons but not as servants. At first they were disappointed because the villagers did not respond to them. They asked the villagers to do something and when they returned to the village the next day to see what the villagers had turned out, they found nothing was done. The students at once found out the difference when they themselves took up the spade and shovel and bent their backs. Mahatmaji, proceeding, pointed out how those students introduced the spinning-wheel in the villages and how the villagers co-operated with the party in all their endeavours to do service. He next referred to Dr. Dev of the Servants of India Society who was sent on a medical mission to some of the villages near Champaran where Mahatmaji was then helping the villagers in removing some of their grievances. Dr. Dev, he said, was endeavouring to establish model villages by bringing forward reforms in sanitation and removal of dirt and disease. He next described the way in which Dr. Dev with the co-operation of the villagers and others, introduced sanitary principles in the village by themselves cleaning the wells, and removing dirt and filth from the houses. Dr. Dev and his co-workers soon found a ready response from the villagers in such kinds of social service, and the villagers out of their own shame came forward not only to help Dr. Dev and others but to learn how they themselves could do the work.

Proceeding, Mahatmaji exhorted the students in these words to equip themselves for rendering social service:

Your real education begins after you leave your colleges and schools. You learn things there from day to day, but you should know how to apply what you have learnt there. Very often what you have learnt there has to be unlearnt by you, viz., those ideas of false economics which have been dinned into your ears and ideas of false history that are given to you. You have, therefore, to use the faculty of observation and see beneath the surface of things, rather scratch the surface and see what is hidden underneath it. The foundation of service to the nation and the foundation of your education is to be laid not by reading Shakespeare, Milton and other poets or prose writers in English or by reading Sanskrit works of Kalidasa or Bhavabhuti. The foundation of service and

your real training lie in spinning khaddar. Why do I say that? Because you have to deal with millions of people and you have to make two blades of grass grow where only one blade is growing today. If you want to add to the wealth of the country and its output, then believe me that the spinning-wheel is the only salvation. The classes alone read the *shlokas* of Kalidasa or even of Rabindranath Tagore. I know the life of Bengal and can say that these things are read only in the classes. How to link the classes with the masses is for me one of the greatest problems. I have hundreds and thousands of students in the Gujarat Vidyapith for whose welfare I am supposed to be one of the trustees. This problem puzzles me. But I consider that their real work lies not in the big cities where they receive education, but in going out to villages after finishing their education and in spreading the message that they have learnt into the villages, thereby establishing a living relationship with the villagers. I defy anybody to say how that can be established except on their own terms. The villagers want bread—and not butter—and disciplined work, some work that will supplement their agricultural avocations which do not go on for all the 12 months. My friends, if you will seriously consider your avocation in life, let this be the foundation of your work and I am sure you will do it. (Loud cheers.)

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

206. SPEECH AT LABOURERS' MEETING, MADRAS[1]

March 22, 1925

FRIENDS AND FELLOW LABOURERS,

I thank you for the address that you have presented to me. I thank also the Madras Literary Academy for its address. I call you fellow-labourers, that is, I call myself a labourer because I take pride in calling myself a spinner, weaver, farmer and scavenger. I have thrown in my lot with you so far as a man like me could do, and I have done so because I feel that India's salvation lies through you. I have done so also because I feel that India's salvation lies in labour, in manual labour, which is not

[1] Addresses of welcome were presented at the meeting by the Choolai Congress and the Madras Literary Academy. Gandhiji's speech was translated into Tamil, sentence by sentence, by M. S. Subramania Iyer.

to be had by reading books or mental gymnastics. I have realized and I am realizing it day after day that man is born to labour with his own body for his bodily sustenance. In mixing with a spinner, weaver and other labourers, I insistently tell them never to cease to be labourers but to add to their bodily labour mental education. But I know that the joy that I can derive from labour is not your lot. Labour to most of you is painful toil without pleasure. It is so, and it is painful toil, partly because your labour is exploited by moneyed men but mostly because of your own defects and limitations. The third reason, therefore, why I have become a labourer is to be able to draw, from the same level that you occupy, your attention to these limitations and defects. You know that I am practically living with thousands of labourers in Ahmedabad. I know the whole of their life and I do not suppose that you are very different from them. There I have observed that these labourers, and probably you also, are given to the drink habit. Many of you gamble away your money. You do not live at peace with your neighbour but quarrel with one another. You are often jealous of one another. You often do not do the work allotted to you in an honest manner. You often place yourselves under the guidance of those who do not lead you in the proper channel and, I know, become impatient of any wrong that is done to you. You sometimes think that you can remove that wrong by using violence. Those of you who do not belong to the *Panchama* classes regard your *Panchama* brethren with despite and contempt. If night-schools are opened for you, you will not attend them. If schools are opened for your little children, you will not send your children to those schools. You do not very often know what a nation is. Instead of living for the nation, very often you are satisfied with living merely for yourself. That is not the kind of labourer I call myself or want to be. You do not even think of your still poorer countrymen and women and, therefore, do not use hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. Therefore, I am never tired of speaking, when I speak to labour gatherings such as these, of drawing the attention of the labourers to their own limitations.

I want you, therefore, to recognize and realize that you are not and you should be in no way inferior to any other class of people in this country. I want you to be able to develop the capacity for understanding national affairs. If you will do all these things, you must give up drink. You should give up insanitation and filth. Whether you are living in houses for which

you are paying rent and whether you are living in houses built for you by your employers, you should decline positively to live in dirty houses where there is no sunshine and where there is no air. You must keep your houses and yards absolutely clean of all dirt, of insanitation. You must keep your own bodies clean by washing them properly every day, and as your bodies and surroundings must be absolutely clean so should your life be chaste. You must never gamble. Send your children to schools that may be started or made by you, not so that your children may become clerks and cease to be labourers, but that they may remain labourers and be able to use their intelligence also. If you have no temples, if you are Hindus, if you have no mosques, if you are Mohammedans, you should lay by a certain sum and build these places of worship for yourselves. Those of you who are Hindus should not regard any body of Hindus as untouchables, *Panchamas* or Pariahs. No man dare cast his lustful eyes upon another's woman and lastly, as to your wearings—I know many of you are wearing foreign clothes, whether it comes from Manchester or Japan or even from Bombay and Ahmedabad, you must cease to wear them and wear only hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. I ask you to wear khaddar because every yard of khaddar that you buy means a few annas, two or three annas, into the pockets of labourers like yourselves.

I am asking every labourer of India to learn and practise everyday hand-spinning, carding and, if possible, even weaving. There is a special reason for my asking the labourers to do so. In 1918, when the first strike of mill-hands took place in Ahmedabad, I refused to lead that strike upon public subscription. But I called upon them to labour elsewhere in order to be able to bring the strike to a successful end, without troubling the public. Since then, I have learned better and now I ask the labourers to learn these so that if they have to embark upon strikes they can live to an indefinite length of time upon spinning, carding and weaving. If you are sufficiently industrious, you can weave your own cloth. I hope you will take in all that I have said to you tonight. You should endeavour to do everything that I have told you. Early in the morning, getting up at four o'clock, ask God, before you do anything else, to help you to do the things that I have referred to this evening.

I thank you for coming to this meeting and listening to me with so much patience. May God bless you and enable you to lead pure and good lives! (Loud and prolonged cheers.)

The Hindu, 23-3-1925

207. IS BOMBAY ASLEEP?

[MADRAS,
Monday, March 23, 1925][1]

I constantly hear complaints to the effect that spinning-wheels do not ply in Bombay, no one buys khadi, the people are not found wearing it, black caps are again as common as in 1920, national schools are closing down, etc., etc. Bombay is being served by two khadi bhandars[2] and the All-India Khadi Board. Together, their sales do not exceed Rs. 30,000. Shri Jerajani[3] has published the figures for four years, which throw some useful light. It is now the fifth year since the bhandar started working under his management. Its sales during January 1923 amounted to Rs. 22,299 and during January 1924 to Rs. 22,516, whereas last January they amounted to only Rs. 14,401. In those years, for the month of February they amounted to Rs. 15,747 and Rs. 21,664, respectively, as compared to which this February they amounted to Rs. 13,524 only. Thus I find that instead of rising, the sales are on the decline. I have also come to know that since my release from prison there has been a fall in the sale of khadi in the entire country, as compared to what it was when I was still in prison. Although this is something that makes me ashamed, nevertheless I can understand it. So long as I was in prison, people were concerned for me and believed that the spread of khadi was a way of securing my release before my term expired and that, on my release, I would immediately secure swaraj. As for the first consideration, it was meaningless to feel concern for me. I was not unhappy in prison either mentally or physically. I liked living there. I still wonder whether I can be of the same service outside prison as I was in it. The second consideration needs to be further examined. For all-out propagation of khadi would certainly have secured my early release. The consideration, however, that I would secure swaraj immediately on my release, was one which should make the people feel ashamed of themselves. Who am I to give them swaraj? Swaraj has to be won, who can give it and to whom? More-

[1] From Gandhiji's reference to the date and place of writing in the last paragraph

[2] Stores

[3] V. V. Jerajani; manager of a khadi bhandar run on model lines in Bombay and Director of Sales of the All-India Congress Khaddar Department

over, I have been released but swaraj seems to be receding farther. According to me, it is coming nearer. I believe further that the speed with which it approaches us is in direct proportion to the number of yards of yarn that we spin and the number of yards of khadi that we make and use.

This does not, of course, mean that we have to give up our other obligations. But it does mean that, in spite of fulfilling all other tasks, there can be no swaraj without khadi and no khadi without the spinning-wheel.

Hence, I am pained when I hear reports that the sale of khadi in Bombay has declined. The sale at the second bhandar which is in Kalbadevi is relatively good, but its figures for last year are not available as its very existence was uncertain. It has now been placed on a sound footing. Nevertheless, even though the total monthly sale at the two bhandars may amount to Rs. 30,000, it is nothing much for a city like Bombay! It would not cause surprise if five or even ten such bhandars thrive there. Not a single street in Bombay is without a shop selling foreign cloth. On one road, at every step, there are many such shops. A shop selling khadi appears to be something foreign, strange there, while one selling foreign goods seems like swadeshi—our own. What kind of swaraj would it be which the owners of these shops and their customers hope for? Would it not be foreign rule mistakenly termed swaraj? Alternatively, would it not be a rule of selfishness? What place would the poor have in this trade amounting to crores of rupees? Where could the poor turn for relief under such a government? I regard it as impossible even to understand the sentiment of swaraj so long as khadi is not fully accepted—and foreign cloth is not totally boycotted. How can anyone who has no teeth know the joy of chewing? How can anyone who has no tongue realize what it means to speak? How can anyone who hesitates to wear the cloth that is spun and woven by the poor of his country know what it means to serve the poor? What does he know of swaraj? What could India's freedom mean to anyone who does not like Indian villages, Indian customs and Indian food? What part of the country would be served by his plan of swaraj?

Hence the khadi bhandars are the instruments for measuring how far the citizens of Bombay are eager to win swaraj. The readings on this instrument give a depressing picture of Bombay.

Let us now examine the condition of the *Antyajas*.

How very strange it is that the *Antyajas* cannot get any living accommodation? Many of them have to vacate even the dilapi-

dated municipal buildings, those who live there do so with difficulty, Hindu landlords do not rent out buildings to them. In such circumstances, what could swaraj mean to the *Antyajas*? Supposing Bombay had a Hindu Governor, his chief minister, a man who regarded untouchability as his dharma, his minister, a person who would not rent out his building to the *Antyajas*; in such a swaraj set-up, what freedom will the *Antyajas* taste? Bombay, it seems, would fail even in this test.

Let us now examine the remaining problem, namely, Hindu-Muslim unity. Although it cannot be said that the problem is as acute in Bombay as it is elsewhere, something like a wrestling bout goes on even there. Things may appear smooth on the surface; God alone, however, knows what is hidden beneath. I frequently hear reports that the members of either community are smouldering within. The fellow-feeling which existed in 1921 no longer exists. Instead, there is certainly sourness if not bitterness. The abscess of suspicion has appeared. Each community has practically lost faith in the other.

Bombay, which is the first city of India, which was the capital of Pherozshah Mehta's empire, the field of Dadabhai's activity, the place where Ranade[1], Badruddin and others achieved fame, appears to be asleep today!

I am writing this article in Madras on Monday the 23rd in the serenity of my silence day. On Friday[2] the 26th, I have to meet the Bombay Provincial Committee. I shall then know more of the real state of affairs. After that, we shall review once again the situation there.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-3-1925

[1] Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842-1901); judge, social reformer and author; one of the founders of the Indian National Congress

[2] 26th was a Thursday.

208. LETTER TO KRISHNADAS

March 23, 1925

MY DEAR KRISHNADAS,

This is an idle letter merely to tell you that I have always thought of you and Guruji. I wonder if he has still the same doubt he had about the pact. I hope he is keeping well.

You seem to be keeping better. You *must* know that whenever you feel like travelling with me, you are free to do so. Do not expect me to take the initiative. For, I can get your service best where you feel most happy and keep good health. I have or should have no likes and dislikes. We are all soldiers fighting the same battle. I am a general requiring the best soldiers to tell me where they can serve most. When I feel that I want to make dispositions myself, I will not hesitate for a single moment.

Here is a cutting you gave me months ago and which I have carried with me all these months. I reach there 27th.

With blessings,

BAPU

From a photostat: G.N. 5599

209. TELEGRAM TO C. R. DAS

MADRAS,
March 24, 1925

DESHBANDHU DAS
RENIER ROAD
CALCUTTA

CONGRATULATIONS Y[OU]R VICTORY. HOPE YOU ARE RESTORED. GOING AHMEDABAD TODAY.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

210. TELEGRAM TO W. H. PITT[1]

MADRAS,
March 24, 1925

POLICE COMMISSIONER
TRIVANDRUM

THANKS WIRE. AM WIRING VYKOM COMPLETION AGREEMENT IN TERMS MY LETTER OF 18TH AND INSTRUCTING OBSERVANCE. TRUST WITHDRAWAL ORDER WILL BE FOLLOWED UP BY OTHER MEASURES CONTEMPLATED MY LETTER.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

211. TELEGRAM TO K. KELAPPAN NAIR

Via MADRAS,
March 24, 1925

KELAPPAN NAIR
SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM
VYKOM

RECEIVED WIRE FROM GOVERNMENT ACCEPTING LETTER 18TH INSTANT. ORDER WILL BE WITHDRAWN 7TH APRIL AND BARRICADES AND PICKETS TOO WILL BE REMOVED. PRESENT NUMBER SATYAGRAHIS SHOULD CONTINUE SPIN OR STAND WHERE THEY ARE BUT ON NO ACCOUNT CROSS BOUNDARY LINE NOTWITHSTANDING REMOVAL ORDER BARRICADES AND PICKETS. LEAVING TODAY FOR AHMEDABAD WHERE WIRE PROGRESS.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

[1] In reply to the addressee's telegram dated March 23, 1925 (S.N. 13268 M) which read: "Reference your letter 18th instant. Prohibitory order will be withdrawn from Tuesday 7th April on your telegraphing acceptance. Kindly instruct Vykom satyagrahis to observe agreement from that date."

212. LETTER TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

March 24, 1925

In handing the above correspondence[1] for publication, it is only necessary for me to point out that the agreement embodied therein marks a step forward in the movement now going on at Vykom. The satyagrahis respecting the boundary line, in spite of the removal of the barrier and removal also of the order of prohibition, would, on the one hand, show the completely non-violent nature of the struggle and, on the other, prove the *bona fides* of the Government declaration that they favour the reform for which the satyagrahis are fighting. I am hoping that the opponents of the reform will reciprocate the gesture made by the satyagrahis.

The Hindu, 24-3-1925

213. SPEECH AT CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY, MADRAS[2]

March 24, 1925

FRIENDS,

I am obliged to you for having invited me to meet you. I am obliged to you also for your address. I appreciate and understand your sentiments; the more so, as you may not admit it, but some day even you will admit that I am engaged in running the greatest co-operative society that the world has ever seen. I may fail miserably and if I fail it will be because of your weakness or want of response. I am engaged in running a co-operative society in which 300 millions of people of this earth may become willing members, men, women and children, lepers and men—men who are in perfect health and lepers in mind, body and soul. So you see that at least here there is a desire to follow literally the maxim that you have got, viz., "Each shall live for all and all shall live for each." If you really measure the value of that teaching, you will find the hidden meaning of that truth

[1] *Vide* "Letter to W. H. Pitt", 18-3-1925 and "Telegram to W. H. Pitt", 24-3-1925.

[2] In reply to a welcome address presented by the Triplicane Urban Co-operative Society at Big Street

and understand the deep and hidden meaning of the spinning-wheel. Therefore, I invite you, the co-operators, to join the greatest co-operative society in the world. You cannot begin to do that unless you make up your minds to spin for at least half an hour per day, and unless you adopt khaddar as your costume.

The Hindu, 24-3-1925

214. SPEECH AT AYURVEDIC PHARMACY, MADRAS[1]

March 24, 1925

Mahatmaji said that perhaps those responsible for the function did not realize that he seemed to be entirely out of tune there. They did not know that he made these remarks even when he performed the opening ceremony of a medical college with which his esteemed friend Hakim Ajmal Khan, was connected. From his chair on that occasion he had to dissociate himself from much that went under the name of Unani, Ayurvedic or European medicine. He was opposed to indiscriminate use of drugs. It did not give any pleasure to him to hear that Dr. Sri Ramacharlu was able to distribute his medicines amongst two lakhs of people or twenty lakhs of people. He could not congratulate the doctor on his successful advertisement of *makaradhwaja*[2]. What was wanted among their physicians was a real touch of humility. It was a matter of good fortune to him to have friends among both allopathic doctors and Ayurvedic and Unani physicians; but they all knew his mind thoroughly that he could not possibly endorse their activities in the distribution of drugs.

He wished the physicians of the modern day took the role of the physicians of old, when they gave their lifetime to make researches and distribute relief among the people without taking a single farthing. That was unfortunately not the case today. What he noticed at present was that the Ayurvedic physicians were trying to live on the past glories of Ayurveda. The system of diagnosis was still in the primitive stage and it could not be in any measure compared with that prevailing under the Western system. Whatever might be said of the Western system—he had said a great deal on that subject—one thing must be said in its favour, that it had got humility and it had got research; and there were physicians and surgeons who gave their whole time to this work, the world not knowing them. He wished that spirit would fire the Ayurvedic physicians. But unfortunately what he noticed today was hunger for wealth and renown and hunger for coming to the top. That was not the way in which they would be able to serve Ayurveda. He knew there were most potent and efficacious drugs in Ayurveda. But today because they

[1] In reply to its welcome address at Mount Road

[2] An Ayurvedic medicinal preparation

had forgotten the art, they had really lost the use of that. He had discussed these things with many physicians and they had nodded assent to all that he had been saying.

You would not call me a dear friend of yours, when you have purposely invited me to come here, if I do not utter this truth that is lying deeply rooted in me. And it is a result not of a day's thought or a hurried thought; but it is the result of nearly 40 years of observation and also experiments in hygiene and sanitation. As a result of these things, I have come to the deliberate conclusion that the best physician is one who administers the least number of drugs. The surgeon who performed the operation on the late King Edward and so successfully performed it, has said that in his pharmacopoeia there were but two or three drugs that he used. Otherwise he left nature to do its own work. I trust that our physicians understand the secret that nature is the sweetest, the quickest and the best restorer of health, whereas what I find is that all kinds of experiments are being made, arousing the basest passions of humanity. The advertisements that I see of medicines make me sick. I feel that physicians are rendering no service to humanity whatsoever but the greatest disservice by claiming every medicine as the panacea for all ills of life. I plead for humility, simplicity and truth.

The Hindu, 24-3-1925

215. SPEECH ON PROHIBITION, MADRAS[1]

March 24, 1925

It is a very great pleasure that I am able today to speak to you on the matter of temperance and it is a matter of great honour that I am doing so under the chairmanship of one whom I revere for her long, great and continuous services to the motherland. The cause of temperance I have handled now, I think, for 30 years, if not longer. The horror of drink I have inherited from my revered mother when she gave me her permission to proceed to England. Some of you may know she imposed upon me three vows or obligations, one of which was that I should abstain from drinking. I may tell you that she did not know what a great curse the drink evil was. She had no knowledge of the masses and

[1] At a meeting of temperance workers at the Gokhale Hall. Dr. Besant presided.

the destruction that the drink evil was bringing into their homes. In the place where I was brought up and at the time of which I am now speaking to you there was probably very little drinking going on in that beautiful little city, Rajkot. However, the fact that she imposed this obligation on me, naturally, put me upon my guard and set me thinking also why it was that rather than imposing other vows she had imposed these three vows of which this was one. I set sail and I met several people on board. I was a duffer and could not carry on a sustained conversation with my fellow-passengers in English. One of them was from Kutch, a district in Kathiawar, and he told me that after we had crossed the Bay of Biscay I would be compelled to drink. I said I would wait. He asked what I would do if my doctors advised drink. I said I would die if that were the only condition on which I could live, rather than break a sacred promise deliberately made to my mother.

So I proceeded to London. I saw everything that was going on before my eyes whenever I stood in front of those great palaces called public houses, where people went in as sober men and came out of these so-called palaces dead drunk. I had absolutely no opportunity to do any work in England. It filled one with a great desire for working in the cause of temperance and a great desire for rescuing Indians from this curse. I may also inform you that the time when I went to London was the time when some of the students and teachers were infatuated with everything Western and so they drank on the liner and it was supposed to be a fashionable thing to do so. So when I observed this in London, I felt that I should work in order to wean away the youths of our country from indulging in drink in this land.

Little did I know that I would find myself within two years of my return to India in South Africa and amidst some of the poorest of our land, all of whom were given not only to drinking but drinking to excess. But such was my good fortune or misfortune, whichever you may call it, that I witnessed the ruin, in Natal, among the indentured Indians, of hundreds of helpless women as well as men who were given to drinking. I tried—and in those days I was not a non-co-operator; although I was fighting the Government in different parts of South Africa, I was closely co-operating with them in all humility wherever they accepted the co-operation so tendered — I tried to persuade them to prohibit drinking among our own countrymen. You will be painfully surprised to know that I had to face opposition from our own countrymen and they set up the question of rights and privi-

leges and they said that where Europeans could drink freely, Indians must also have that right. (Laughter.) It was not possible for me and, I must confess, it was to my shame that the majority of them I was really unable to convince, even after 20 years' stay in South Africa, that that was a question which admitted of no privilege and competition. If I had time I could give pictures of captains who were dead drunk, when sailing under them was really a dangerous thing; not that they wanted to drink to excess but that they forgot themselves. Some of them had become my friends but when they took to these things I saw what a curse it proved to them; what a danger they were to the community which was at that time under their absolute charge. I told my friends that it was not a matter of right, that if we at least for ourselves could secure prohibition, we could save these families. And ever since that time it has been a question with me and some of my friends who were against me on the matter of prohibition *versus* purely taking the gospel of temperance to the homes of the people.

I have definitely come to the conclusion that merely preaching amongst the masses will not do, for they do not know what they are doing. I was, just before I came to this Presidency, travelling as you are aware, in Kathiawar. It is a place which contains numerous small principalities. In one of these places the families of men who were given to this wretched habit pleaded that they should be saved from themselves. How could I save them from themselves except by prohibiting distillation altogether, except for medicinal purposes? I would apply absolutely the same formula to drink as the opium leagues in America are applying to opium. I do not know whether opium is a greater evil than drink. Possibly there is not much to choose, but from a purely moral point of view I am inclined to think that if I had to give a decided opinion, I would vote against drinking because drinking saps the moral foundations. I know thousands of men who consider themselves moderate drinkers but they have not trained themselves to be moderate in their habits. I have bosom friends who knew no distinction between wife, mother and sister, but when they revive and regain their senses, they do not understand what an evil it was, and go to it again and again. I recall the instance of a friend, an English friend from Australia. He was earning £40 a month. It is a good income. He was a fine engineer and, I may tell you, Madam, that he was a good theosophist because he really wanted to be helped against himself. He asked me whether I knew anything because he knew my incli-

nation in this direction that I was a dietician and reformer about diet and that I had dabbled in these things. So we became friends through that small theosophical circle which often used to invite me to attend their meetings. His name was Patterson. I don't know what he is doing today. He struggled against the heaviest odds. So long as he was with me and under my roof, he kept himself under restraint. Immediately we were separated, a few days later I received a letter from him saying, "I have gone back again." Such is the mastery that it gets over men. Opium does likewise, it stupefies and it deadens us but drink excites and stimulates so much that from the lap of God we find ourselves in the lap of Satan.

Therefore, I feel that if we could persuade our legislators to give up this income from opium and drink, I would do so today. I would sacrifice the education of all our children, if we could not educate them without this revenue. But I do not want to speak to you this morning about this revenue that we are deriving from our unfortunate countrymen. Better it is for me that I should place before you some of my experiences and tell you how it is possible to work amongst the people because legislation is a matter not given to all of us. It is for the legislators and it is given to the Government. But to reach these homes and take a little bit of comfort to them is given to everyone of us. I have found by experience that it is not preaching that will serve the purpose at all. We must go into these homes and study their lives. I fully endorse your remarks, Madam, that it would be no solution of the problem unless we probe into the causes. Our countrymen, I say, people all over the world, do not drink for the sake of drinking. Those who have drunk or tasted liquor tell me that the taste of it was not fine. There is no delicacy about it unless there may be delicacy about wines a hundred or two hundred years old. That was not what millions of the people drink or can possibly drink. I am inclined to think that it was an acquired taste. I am talking of ordinary liquors. They tell me that they take it more for the after-effects, the delirium that it produces, the momentary pleasure that they have when they forget themselves. All of us perhaps at some time of our lives have to forget ourselves. We can recall some pleasures which are no pleasures but are really painful, I was going to use a stronger expression, "hell fire". So if we want to do temperance work we should go to the homes, not [look down] from our lofty superior heights and not treat these countrymen of ours with contempt, not consider ourselves angels coming from heaven because we do not drink and they drink.

We must ask ourselves when we go there whether we would not have done exactly the same thing that they do. Do you know what the labourers in Bombay are doing? They are in boxes miscalled houses. There is no ventilation; not one family but many families live in the same room, which these wretched people often sublet, many times contrary to regulations; because they spend their all on drink and they have to feed their starving children. For the sake of those children not only do they sublet but they gamble and indulge in all conceivable vices.

Why do they drink? Living in pestilential dens, they are suffocated. You don't go to their places. They work for 8 or 10 hours under overseers who are goading them to the task. You do not go there and return from one den to another much worse. You do not serve under these conditions. When you cannot get good and clean rice, when you get *atta* (flour) putrefied and fermented and when even for their babies they cannot get milk, you will understand their condition. Even some of the richest gentlemen in Bombay cannot get pure and unadulterated milk, unless they keep cows or buffaloes in their homes. It is very difficult for even a millionaire to keep cows or buffaloes in Bombay which is horribly over-crowded. Then what are these people to do? They have no homes as you can see. Their workshop is a hell. They have no friends to give them advice. They have no God because they have forgotten God, they almost fancy there is no God because if there was a God they would not be so forsaken. Such is their miserable condition.

What can we do for them? Let some of you go to those places and try to live in those dens and then see whether you do not also want to drink. With my own hands I have given rum to the people in the Boer War, in the forced march we had to make under the sultry sun. One of the wounded soldiers that we carried was the late General Woodgate. Among the stretcher-bearers who did valiant work there were some who were given to drink. They said: "You must get us at least some rum, if you want work from us tomorrow, for those who do hard work". I pleaded with them: "I have marched with you and rum was allowed as a ration. Especially with others who don't want rum, must you have it?" They said, "Yes". I went to the officer in charge of the rations and signed a memorandum, as I was in charge of the Ambulance Corps. I had the geatest pleasure to give them the rum, not without compunction, mind you. I can feel so if I was in the midst of labourers and under these trying circumstances I would feel tempted to give rum, whisky, brandy whatever it

was, to these men so that they might forget their sorrow. That is the origin of this curse. Men and women helplessly go to it and, if you want to redeem them, you can never do it by speeches. We shall do it by going down to them and by stooping to conquer, by trying to understand their difficulties and trying to remove them. In the attempt to remove those difficulties you must remain firm, and if you remained untouched and free there is hope for you and hope for them. Otherwise there is no other hope. I thought I could give you a bit of my experience and I would engage your attention upon scores of such instances drawn from life, everyone of them; not merely in one part of India but almost from every part of India, not from one stratum of society but from all strata and not merely in South Africa but also in England. But, I think, I have told you enough at least to fire the ambition of some of you to make researches in that direction. You have got in the slums of Madras many men and women who do not think of the severe nature of the problem. If you will think of the whole problem you will be baffled. It is not one man's work. It is not given to all to compass this magnificent work. But like every drop in the ocean which singly will not enable a great steamer to sail but will do so if all drops stand, let all stand in their places resolute so that they could perform the Herculean task. If we regard ourselves as the drops in the sea, a miserable drop, and will be true to ourselves, I have no doubt that a day will dawn upon India when the drink curse will have vanished. (Loud applauses.)

The Hindu, 24-3-1925

216. SPEECH AT HINDI PRACHAR KARYALAYA, MADRAS[1]

March 24, 1925

FRIENDS,

It is a strange thing for me to have to speak to you in English although this is a place where Hindi is supposed to be understood. As a majority of those present just now do not know Hindi, I propose to confine my speech to the English language. Hindi propaganda is, in my opinion, a necessary thing for the growth of real nationalism in India especially, as that nationalism is to be conceived in terms of the masses. More than five years ago, this

[1] In reply to an address of welcome in Hindi presented by the Hindi Prachar Samiti, Madras

idea was conceived in Indore when I presided over the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan Conference. At that time the idea was that for five years the whole propaganda should be conducted with money collected from outside the Southern Presidency, as the majority of the speakers were Marwari gentlemen who were lovers of Hindi. Five years have elapsed and something has been done to make it self-supporting. I, therefore, seek another opportunity of saying that the Southern Presidency should take this burden from off the shoulders of the North. It is a matter of duty on their part to do so. There are very few young men who study and learn Hindi. When the idea was conceived, I thought that there would be young men who would be flocking to the free Hindi classes in the name of the Congress whenever they could. But it has been a matter of great disappointment to me and to those who are conducting the classes that the young men have given very little encouragement. But it is not for us to give way to despair. This institution is going to remain here even though there may be only one Tamilian wishing to learn Hindi, because those who have taken this burden on their shoulders have full faith in themselves. At the same time the lovers of Hindi language who bring the language to the door of the Tamils are bound to tell them that they have not received adequate response.

The Hindu, 24-3-1925

217. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN COLLEGE, MADRAS

March 24, 1925

As you know, throughout my journey in India, I meet students, both boys and girls, but whenever I come to the South, I meet many more girls than I meet elsewhere except, perhaps in Bengal, because in Bengal the education of girls has gone forward much more than in other parts of Upper India but, by no means, so much as in south India. I was really surprised to see the stride that education among girls had taken in the State of Travancore. It was a perfect eye-opener to me. The question has always occurred to me: "What will India do with its modern girls?" I call you modern girls of India. The education that we are receiving in these institutions, in my opinion, does not correspond with the life around us, and, when I say life around us, I do not mean the life around us in the cities but the life around us in the villages. Perhaps some of you girls, if not all of you, know that

real India is to be found not here in the very few cities but in the seven hundred thousand villages covering a surface of 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad. The question is whether you have any message for your sisters in the villages. Men do not need the message perhaps so much as the women, and I have long before come to the conclusion that unless women of India work side by side with men, there is no salvation for India, salvation in more senses than one. I mean political salvation in the broadest sense, and I mean economic salvation and spiritual salvation also.

We may call ourselves Christians, Hindus or Mohammedans. Whatever we may be, beneath that diversity there is a oneness which is unmistakable and underneath many religions there is also one religion. As far as my experience goes, at one time or other, we, the Mohammedans, Christians or Hindus, discover that there are many points of contact and very few points of difference. Then I would like you to ask yourselves whether you have any message for the villages, for the women of the villages, for your sisters there. I am afraid you will also come to the same conclusion as I have, that you will never have a message unless something is added to your education. It is true that the present educational system takes no notice of the village life. It is not so in other parts of the world. In the other parts of the world, I have noticed that those in charge of education take note of the masses of the people among whom these products of schools and colleges have to live and have to disperse, among whom they have to act. But in India, I have noticed that the student world is isolated from the masses of the people. I have no doubt that some of you are poor girls descended of poor parents. If you have not made that discovery yourselves, I ask you to make it for yourselves and ask yourselves whether the things that you learnt here you are able to take to them or whether there is real correspondence between home life and school life. The lack of that correspondence has appeared to be the tragedy. I have suggested, therefore, to the whole student world of India to add something to what they are learning in schools, and then you will find there will be some satisfaction for themselves and some satisfaction for the masses also and to those who will be so good as to think of the masses.

I have known that Christian girls and Christian boys, at least some of them, consider that they have nothing in common with the vast masses of people. That is mere ignorance. No good Christian nowadays says that and, I am sure, no one here in charge of your education gives you that training and teaches you that you have

nothing in common with the masses. No matter to what religion you belong, I say that you were born in India, take Indian food and pass your life in India. Your life would be incomplete in more senses than one unless you can identify yourselves with the masses. What is that bond between the masses and yourselves? You may know or you may be told about the ridiculous percentage of literacy in India. You will perhaps be told that the literacy in India is on the decrease whilst higher education is increasing. Somehow or other, education among the masses is decreasing. Whereas every village had a school 50 years ago, these schools have gone for want of patrons. The Government had established new schools but unfortunately those in charge of the educational system took no notice of these village schools. The proportion of literate people in India today is really less than the proportion that existed 50 years ago.

What is the message? I suggest the spinning-wheel because of the deep poverty of the Indian masses. Some of us know that in this country, at any rate among the masses, women have to earn side by side with the men. This is perhaps one of the few countries in the world where women do the hard task also. I am coming from a part of India where women take up even a shovel or a pickaxe. They do the work on the roads and break stones. One hundred years ago, they did not do this. Whenever social workers go to work among the masses, women surround them and ask for the spinning-wheel so that they might get a few pice. This may mean nothing to you but they mean a fortune to them. I wish that your Principal will one day take you to the surrounding villages so that you might have an ocular demonstration of what the women of India are doing. You will not then need that I should press this message home to you. You will have to take up the spinning-wheel, which is the bond that will tie you indissolubly to the masses. Let it be for ever a reminder to you. After your education is finished you will not disappear from public life; you will not disappear in the household simply doing the household work but you will extend your helping hand to the poor and needy, who need all the help that can be given to them. I hope this will serve as an inestimable instrument in your hands to bring cheer into those unhappy homes where extreme desolation prevails. The historians of India will tell us that about one-tenth of the population lives in semi-starvation. Can you contemplate that with any degree of satisfaction? Can I not hope to fire you with the ambition to serve them? I see that a majority of you are Christians. Let me remind you of one saying of

Jesus. He said: "It would be easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Remembering this, dedicate the education that you are receiving for the use of the poor.

May God bless you!

The Hindu, 25-3-1925

218. SPEECH AT "SWARAJYA" OFFICE, MADRAS[1]

March 24, 1925

You have very clearly set forth what my ambition at the present moment is. Eating, walking, sleeping and doing everything, I can think of nothing but the spinning of khaddar, removal of untouchability and unity of almost all classes and races. But there is a limit to our capacity for doing the work in the last two things; all cannot pay equal contribution to the removal of untouchability and all cannot also pay equal contribution to the bringing together of the different classes say, at the present day, the Hindus and Mussalmans or, as I now discover, the non-Brahmins and Brahmins. (Laughter.) As I say, this is not one in which everyone could only assist or simply refrain by doing anything [*sic*]. Therefore, it takes a negative character; whereas in spinning and khaddar the young, the old and debilitated could do their very best. A little *Panchama* boy could beat Mr. Prakasam hollow, if he chooses, in hand-spinning, (Laughter.) and a man in the street can give points to Mr. Srinivasa Iyengar, so far as wearing khaddar is concerned.

I feel thankful, therefore, for the reassurance given to me in this address that *Swarajya* will not abandon this message of khaddar and of the spinning-wheel, but it will carry it to the hamlets. I do not know how it will carry it to the hamlets, because people do not read the English *Swarajya*. I know that is the only programme before the country which is incredibly the simplest proposition in which all could participate. But the simplest of propositions carry with them the significance of the highest order. I know, I have only this message to give at the present moment and that is our unfortunate tragic position. As I said, speaking to the girls of the college, illiteracy in India is very great and only a small percentage of our people can read and write. How

[1] T. Prakasam, the editor, presented an address of welcome to Gandhiji on behalf of the directors and staff of *Swarajya*.

can they take the message from the newspapers? Therefore, I have suggested to Mr. Prakasam at Poona that he should become a walking newspaper, and to everyone. If we talk less or talk simply of the spinning-wheel, then the message of the spinning-wheel would spread. Take the spinning-wheel, plant yourself in some place in the village and simply turn it away. The villagers and their children will take to it.

I wish really that all our newspapers talk about nothing but the charkha just as you know during the War and even after the War, every home in Europe talked of nothing but the War and its evils. Why may we not do the same thing, if we are convinced that there is no other living tangible programme before the country, and as far as I know, this is the only tangible programme before the country. Therefore, let this message percolate from this office to every hamlet at least in the Southern Presidency. (Loud cheers.)

The Hindu, 25-3-1925

219. SPEECH AT SCAVENGERS' MEETING, MADRAS

March 24, 1925

The scavengers living in Kuppathoti Maidan near Monigar Choultry welcomed Mahatmaji last evening. . . . A member of this profession read a welcome address in Telugu to which Mahatmaji made a brief reply in Hindi which was translated by Mr. G. Rangiah Naidu. Mahatma Gandhi impressed upon them the necessity to observe the principles of sanitation in their daily lives. He advised them to be clean and tidy in their dress and to take a bath every day in the morning. They should pray to God early in the morning and evening. He was sorry to see most of them dressed in dirty clothes. They must not leave their work nor spend their income by taking to vicious habits like drink. In conclusion, he asked them to spin and wear khaddar.

The Hindu, 25-3-1925



220. SPEECH IN REPLY TO CONGRESS SABHA ADDRESS, MADRAS[1]

March 24, 1925

FRIENDS,

I thank you for the address you have presented to me. You know the remedy that I have suggested for the attainment of swaraj. The first thing is that we must all spin for the sake of the country for at least half an hour. We must all wear khaddar, hand-spun and hand-woven. You will not gain anything by crowding in thousands at such meetings if you do not listen to what is being said to you. You must, therefore, everyone of you, discard your foreign cloth and wear khaddar. Hindus must regard untouchability as a crime and a sin. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Jews must all remain together and live together in peace and brotherliness. We must give up drink and gambling and we must all, in due humility, worship God according to our own ways and early in the morning, after having washed our mouth, cleaned our teeth and having regained perfect possession of our faculties, we must announce the name of God and ask Him to help us to be and remain good. We must ask Him to help us to do our duty by our country. We must not think ill of anybody or think of injuring anybody. And if we can do these things, I can see my way clear to attain our freedom in an incredibly short time. If we are to do all these things, we must learn how to keep discipline. All the noise you make, whether it is about me or whether it is about any other servant of the nation, is of no use whatsoever.

If we want, on due occasions, to give expression to certain national cries, they must be given expression to in a musical manner and they must not be taken up on every occasion and every time, but there must be fixed occasions and when the leader takes up the cry others should follow. We heard a great deal of noise at the time when we commenced the meeting. If we are to be soldiers of the nation, we must do even as the soldiers do. Therefore our movements should be orderly. We should be able to hold meetings which thousands can attend without discomfort and without any noise. It is no use trying to touch my feet and

[1] At Peddunaikenpet

shower flowers upon me. By such blind affection and devotion you will be no nearer to swaraj than you are today. Now, I wait to test you just now to see whether you have understood what I have been saying, whether the truth has gone home to you. I am about to finish my speech. I want you not to shout but give me a clear passage to go out without any of you touching my feet, and enable me to pass through swiftly. It should not be necessary for volunteers to form cordons in order to protect me from your embarrassing affection. But before I put you to that test, I want to sum up what I have been saying. This is my last meeting in Madras. From you I am straightaway going to the station. The programme that I have sketched before you now has been before the nation since 1920. I hope to return to this Presidency inside of three months and one thing that I hope is to see everyone I meet in Madras clad from top to toe in hand-spun khaddar. I hope you will besiege Congress offices for cotton and slivers for spinning or spinning-wheels. I pray to God that He may give you all the wisdom to see the necessity of doing what I have been asking you to do and the strength to do these things. I am exceedingly thankful to you for the great patience and silence with which you have listened to my remarks. Now comes the test. I expect all friends on this side of this meeting to give me clear passage and also to keep sitting till I have boarded the car. If you will but do this little thing I shall go easily filled with hope of you and hope of India. God bless you! (Loud applause.)

The Hindu, 25-3-1925

221. ALL ABOUT TRAVANCORE

A Land of Beauty

It was a perfect pleasure to visit Travancore and incidentally Cochin. It is a land of perfect beauty. My few days in Travancore were days of incessant journeying and meeting vast crowds of people. Travancore is blessed with a magnificent waterway and equally magnificent roads. Its extreme length is 179 miles and breadth 75 miles. Its area is 7,625 square miles more than half of which is covered by hills and forests. I entered at the northern entrance. Vykom lies almost on the northern border. The route lay through a beautiful waterway studded on either side with luxuriant vegetation, chiefly palms. I was taken to the extreme south, the Cape Comorin, where the sea daily washes in adoration

the feet of *Hind Mata*[1]. And as I travelled, I seemed to go from one end of a beautifully laid out garden to the other. Travancore is not a country containing a few towns and many villages. It looks like one vast city containing a population of over 4,00,000 males and females almost equally divided and distributed in small farms studded with pleasant looking cottages. There was, therefore, here none of the ugliness of so many Indian villages in which human beings and cattle live together in an overcrowded state in spite of the open air and open space surrounding them. How the Malabaris are able to live thus in isolated cottages and to feel, as they evidently do, safe from the robber and the beast I do not know. Those of whom I inquired about the cause could not say anything beyond corroborating my inference that both men and women must be brave.

The Status of Women

The woman in India lives nowhere in greater freedom than in Malabar. She is more than well protected by the local law and custom. Education among women is nowhere greater than in Travancore. Indeed Travancore appears educationally to be the most advanced part of India. In 1922, general literacy was 244 per thousand of the population, 330 in the case of males and 150 in the case of females. This literacy is daily increasing both among males and females. The backward classes are taking their full share in this wonderful progress. This progress even disturbs a sceptic like me. If all the education means a general discontent with one's surroundings, a wrench with the past without hope for the future and a general scramble for employment, the whole of the beautiful edifice must one fine morning come down with a sudden crash. Without the culture of the heart and the hand mere growth of literacy has no attraction for me. What is wanted therefore is a drastic measure giving not an indifferent manual training but a proper occupational training specially designed to make it worth while for highly educated men not to look up to Government service but to farming, or say weaving, for their maintenance. Unless the mind of the student world is given a bent in the direction of the main and natural sources of livelihood and is developed in a scientific spirit in keeping with the special Indian conditions, the gulf between the educated classes and the masses must widen, the former must live on the latter instead of the former living with and for the latter and sweetening their life.

[1] Mother India

Her Highness the Maharani Regent

But I do not wish to write this note in a critical spirit. For the photograph I have on my mind of Travancore is altogether pleasing. My visit to Her Highness was an agreeable surprise for me. Instead of my being ushered into the presence of an over-decorated woman, sporting costly diamond pendants and necklaces, I found myself in the presence of a modest young woman who relied not upon jewels or gaudy dress for beauty but on her own naturally well-formed features and exactness of manners. Her room was as plainly furnished as she was plainly dressed. Her severe simplicity became the object of my envy. She seemed to me an object lesson for many a prince and many a millionaire whose loud ornamentation, ugly looking diamonds, rings and studs and still more loud and almost vulgar furniture offend the taste and present a terrible and sad contrast between them and the masses from whom they derive their wealth. I had the honour too of waiting on the young Maharaja and the junior Maharani. I found the same simplicity pervading the palace. His Highness was dressed in a spotlessly white dhoti worn in the form of a *lungi*, and vest reaching just below the waist. I do not think he had even a finger ring for an ornament. The junior Maharani was as simply dressed as the senior Maharani the Regent. It was with difficulty that I could see on her person a thin delicate *mangala mala*[1]. Both the ladies had on their persons spotlessly white cotton hand-woven saris and half-sleeved jackets of similar stuff without any lace or embroidery.

The reader must pardon this minute description of the Travancore royalty. It has a lesson for us all. The royal simplicity was so natural because it was in keeping with the whole of the surroundings. I must own that I have fallen in love with the women of Malabar. Barring Assam I have not seen the women of India so simply yet elegantly dressed as the women of Malabar. But let the Assamese sisters know that the women of Malabar are, if possible, simpler still. They do not require even borders to their saris. The length needed is under four yards, a sharp contrast to the Tamil sisters on the east coast who need nearly ten yards heavily coloured saris. The Malabari women reminded me of Sita as she must have been dressed when she hallowed with her beautiful bare feet the fields and forests of India along the route she traversed. To me their white dress has meant the emblem of purity within. I was told that in spite of the utmost

[1] Auspicious necklace

freedom they enjoyed, the women of Malabar were exceptionally chaste. The eyes of the most educated and advanced girls I met betokened the same modesty and gentleness with which God has perhaps endowed the women of India in an exceptional degree. Neither their freedom nor their education seemed to have robbed them of this inimitable grace of theirs. The men of Malabar in general are also just as simple in their taste as the women. But, sad to say, their so-called high education has affected the men for the worse and many have added to the simple articles of their original dress and in so doing have purchased discomfort in the bargain. For, in the melting climate of this country the fewest white garments are the proper thing. In making unnatural unbecoming additions they violate the laws of both art and health.

WANT OF KHADDAR

After all this generally flattering description of the men and women of Malabar, the reader would expect to find here the widest use of khaddar. I am sorry, however, to say that such is not the case. Though there is no warrant for the use of mill-made cloth in Malabar, khaddar has made but little progress. If khaddar was well-organized, the people would take to it without the slightest difficulty. For they have not the excuse for not using it that the people in other parts of India have. They want no colours. They do not need large lengths. They wear no turbans or other head-dress. They are, therefore, well able to take to khaddar without the need of a revolution in their tastes. Not one Malabari spoke to me about the difficulty of persuading the people to adopt khaddar. Some did speak to me about its prohibitive cost. But locally made khaddar need not be dear. For the wages here are low. But no one has thought of organizing the wheel and khaddar. Happily the art has not altogether died out. Near the Cape there is still held a fair at which hand-spun yarn is sold. There are thousands of weavers who are weaving mill-spun yarn.

The Provincial Congress Committee has done some thing but it is sadly little. The Vykom satyagrahis have been doing much more. But ever so much more requires to be done.

THE HOPE

The Legislative Council has recently passed a resolution requiring the Government to introduce the spinning-wheel in the State Vernacular Schools. The Dewan in his address to Sri Mulam

Popular Assembly said that effect would be given to the resolution during the next school year, the necessary provision for the purpose having been made in the current year's budget and the services of a competent spinning instructor having been advertised for. A great deal can be done to popularize hand-spinning if the local Government act in a business-like manner. The State has a hand-weaving department. It has a textile expert. The reference in the address to hand-weaving is worth reproducing. Here it is:

> The textile expert was directed to devote his attention first to the improvement of handloom weaving which is the most important cottage industry in the country. For the introduction and demonstration of improved methods in weaving and dyeing, a central technical institute on a large scale is necessary. The required buildings are in process of construction within the premises of the School of Arts, which have been enlarged by the acquisition of adjoining lands. Pending their completion, a beginning has been made in a rented building, where the textile expert has taken six students each for training in weaving, dyeing and knitting, and is demonstrating improved methods of knitting and handloom weaving and the possibility of utilizing indigenous dyes for dyeing. The institution is open to the public and it is hoped that the people interested in these matters will freely visit it. Two itinerant weaving parties have been entertained to work among cottage weavers in the southern and the northern taluks of the State respectively. It is through these parties that the results obtained by the experiments of the textile expert are spread among the numerous cottage weavers scattered over the whole State. It is reported about 200 dhobis were newly introduced by these parties into the country during 1099. Two depots have been opened for the sale, at cheap rates, of loom accessories to cottage weavers, one at Trivandrum and the other at Nagarcoil, and the itinerant parties also carry for sale these accessories to the cottage weavers' doors.

The same thing that is being done regarding weaving will have to be done regarding hand-spinning if it is to be successful. The department can improve the wheels and inspect those that may be in use. It can give loans of wheels to the poor people and sell them on hire-purchase system. It can encourage voluntary spinning by undertaking weaving at a cheap rate. It can encourage the weavers to take to using hand-spun yarn. What can be more graceful or more appropriate than the royalty taking to spinning and thus popularizing it among the submerged classes? The population is roughly as follows:

Brahmins		60,000
Caste Hindus		7,85,000
Untouchables		17,00,000
Christians		11,72,934
Mussalmans		2,70,478
Animists		12,637
Other religions		349
	Total	40,01,398[1]

Of these, the majority of the seventeen lakhs of untouchables and the eleven lakhs of Christians are very poor. To them spinning as a home industry during leisure hours must be a veritable blessing. Those who have farms do not and cannot work in them the whole day.

The State concentration on the development of this great national industry and the State patronage of khaddar will, at a stroke, increase the saving or, which is the same thing, the income of the people by at least Rs. 12,000,000 counting only Rs. 3 per head of population, for the labour to be spent upon the cotton before it is turned into cloth required for the use of its 40 lakhs of people. An extremely well regulated State like Travancore can solve the problem of famines, floods and poverty in an incredibly short time by handling the question of hand-spinning in a scientific manner.

To the Christians

It was a sad sight to see the Christians from the Bishop downward using foreign cloth. They are the most educated and progressive community in the State. They owe it to the country to use their high education and intelligence for its service. The best service they can render is to adopt spinning and khaddar and lead the way for the other communities. I single out the Christians because they are better organized than the Hindus and the Mussalmans. They are the most influential and the most numerous here compared to the Christians in other parts of India. They can, therefore, easily take the lead in Travancore though they cannot be expected to do so elsewhere.

The Drink Curse

The one thing most deplorable next to untouchability is the drink curse. The total excise revenue of the State was, in 1922,

[1] The source, however, has "40,06,062".

Rs. 46,94,300 against land revenue Rs. 38,18,652 and out of a total revenue of Rs. 1,96,70,130. This I regard as a most serious blot upon the administration. That so much of its revenue should be derived from intoxicants affords food for serious reflection. The excise revenue subdivides itself thus:

Abkari	Rs.	26,82,367
Opium and Ganja	Rs.	3,11,635
Tobacco	Rs.	17,00,298
Total	Rs.	46,94,300

Thus the liquor revenue is a terrific item. I was told that the drink was most prevalent among the Christians and that it was decimating hundreds of homes and bringing poverty and disgrace upon thousands of men otherwise able and intelligent. From all one can see, the State is looking upon the increasing revenue with philosophic calmness, if not pleasure. The communities are playing with the evil and playing at temperance. It is necessary to stamp out the evil before it is too late. The most effective method no doubt is to make the getting of liquor impossible except upon a medical prescription. How to give up the largest source of revenue is the question. If I was the autocrat able to impose my will upon Travancore, I would remove that source of revenue altogether and close every liquor shop, take a census of those who are addicted to the habit and find out means of giving them healthy refreshments and healthy amusement or employment as the case may be and rely upon the people turned sober, contributing to the revenue more by their increased efficiency than by drinking. But the days of autocracy are over. Democracy is the autocrat. The Legislative Council and the Popular Assembly can do the whole thing. It would be wrong to fling one stone at the Maharani Regent and another at the Dewan and say that the duty was done. The people are having a daily increasing share in the administration of the State. They are extremely well-educated. They can force the State to use the whole of the revenue while it is being received, towards the eradication of the evil and insist upon closing the nefarious traffic in a year's time. But whether it can be done in a year, or it must take longer, is for the people to decide. Let them know that there is a snake in the grass. And I respectfully ask once more, who can lead in this matter if not the Christians? My importunity to the Christians does not absolve either the Hindus or the Mussalmans. But in such matters the first appeal must be to the stronger party.

UNAPPROACHABILITY

I have reserved the question that took me to Travancore to the last. I have positively dreaded to write about it. I have remained in exile during the best years of my life and after reaching the age of responsibility. Having returned, I have been absorbed in a series of undertakings which have excluded all other pursuits. I must, therefore, confess my ignorance of many things that as an Indian I should have known. Although I know vaguely that Travancore was called a progressive State, I did not know anything of the marvellous progress it had made in some directions, nor did I know of the ravishing beauty of its landscape. But when I saw with my own eyes what the State is, what a cultured ruler and what a cultured Dewan it had, this existence of unapproachability staggered and puzzled me. How the inhuman thing could exist in such a State with such a Sovereign, such a Dewan and such a people, baffled me as it still baffles me. But for the satyagraha no one would have known anything of it. But now that it is known in its nakedness, I must own that I have become impatient for its removal. I am impatient because I am a Hindu, because the State is a Hindu State, because its Dewan is a Hindu, because the people are educated and because the evil is acknowledged. If it was the British Government, it could certainly plead neutrality if it wished. But since it is a Hindu Government and in this case and in such cases it is not dominated or influenced—not so far as I am aware—by the British Government, it cannot plead or profess neutrality. It must take the side of reform and oppose blind orthodoxy or superstition even as it would take the side of the robbed and come down upon robbers with a heavy hand. A Hindu sovereign is the custodian of the dignity and protection of Hinduism against assault from without and disintegration and corruption from within. It can remove abuses that have crept into Hinduism without any difficulty or even in spite of it. Whilst, therefore, I have been able to appreciate the extreme caution observed by Her Highness and the Dewan Bahadur as representing the Government of Travancore, I have not been able to understand or appreciate the nervous anxiety about the consequences of removing the abuse. But I believe both to be anxious for the removal of the abuse. Though the local men have told me that but for the support, secret and open, given by Government officials to the opponents of reform there would not be even the little opposition that there is to the proposed reform, I have not been able to share this view. I am inclined to think that it is largely based upon suspicion. I, therefore, take at their face value the

Dewan's references reproduced last week in these pages.[1] I am of opinion that he sincerely believes that there is a legal difficulty and that public opinion is not ripe for the reform by legislation. He, therefore, wants to bring it about by consent. The reformers claim that public opinion of *savarna* Hindus has been expressed with sufficient emphasis in that the vast majority of the *savarna* Hindus voted for the council resolution favouring the reform and that the caste Hindu *jatha* that travelled from Vykom to Trivandrum last year proved the same thing. They further point out that of nearly eight lakhs of caste Hindus, over seven lakhs are Nairs and that the Nairs are almost to a man in favour of the reform at least in so far as the use by the unapproachables of public or semi-public roads is concerned. They argue further that the temples are public property of which the Government are trustees. All this argument deserves consideration. But I still feel that it is open to the Government to dispute the inference that the opinion of the *savarnas* is overwhelmingly in favour of reform.

I had the privilege of meeting the opponents of reform who kindly permitted me to wait upon them.[2] They claim that the movement is confined only to a few youngsters, mostly outsiders, that the caste Hindus are overwhelmingly opposed to the claim of the unapproachables which they, the orthodox opponents, refuse to call reform. They contend that the prohibition to use the roads surrounding temples such as the one at Vykom has been handed down from immemorial times and is based on direct writings of Shankaracharya. The spokesman said that if the unapproachables were permitted to pass through the roads in question, the orthodox would not be able to go to the temple for worship. Asked whether Christians and Mussalmans were permitted to use these roads, he replied in the affirmative and said that they were superior to the unapproachables in as much as, he said, they, the unapproachables, were so born as a fit punishment for their misdeeds in the past incarnation and that the taint was indelible during their present incarnation. The spokesman who expressed these views is, I am told, a learned man. I have no doubt that he believes what he says. Whilst, therefore, I hold his view to be totally mistaken and contrary to Hinduism and humanity, I can find it in me to treat him as a friend worthy of regard and affection. That is my meaning of toleration. I do not look forward to a time when we shall all hold one and the same view but I do look forward to a time

[1] *Vide* Appendix.
[2] *Vide* "Discussion with Caste Hindu Leaders, Vykom", 10-3-1925.

when we shall love one another in spite of the sharpest differences of opinion.

And so I made the following proposals to the friends:

1. They should produce Shankara's authority in support of their contention and I would advise the withdrawal of satyagraha from Vykom should the learned Shastris, whom I may consult, regard it as authentic and clearly bearing the construction sought to be put upon it by the orthodox party. It could not bind me for all places for the simple reason that even if Shankaracharya held the view in his time, I would not be bound by what appeared to me to be contrary to religion and humanity.

2. The whole matter could be referred to arbitration consisting of a learned man to be nominated by them, another to be nominated by me on behalf of the satyagrahis and the Dewan of Travancore to be the umpire.

3. A referendum to be taken of all the adult male and female caste Hindus of Vykom alone or of the whole of Travancore or selected areas according as they prefered. The Government should be invited to participate in the organization of the referendum.

The third proposal was put first by me as it was contended by the orthodox party that the caste Hindus were against the reform. But when I took them at their word and said that I would gladly agree to a referendum, the spoksmen veered round and said that in a matter of religious conviction a man could not be bound by the verdict of a majority. I appreciated the force of the suggestion and made the other two proposals. I may say in passing that I proposed a referendum because the present satyagraha is based upon the supposition that *savarna* public opinion is in favour of reform.

None of the proposals was, however, accepted by the gentlemen and I am sorry to say that we parted company without coming to any understanding. I then waited upon Her Highness and she granted me a patient and courteous hearing. She was anxious for the opening of the road at Vykom and appreciated the proposals made by me.

I waited also upon His Holiness Shri Narayan Swami Guru. He entirely approved of the satyagraha movement and said that violence would never succeed and that non-violence was the only method. The next day I waited upon the Dewan Bahadur. He too said he was entirely on the side of reform. His only difficulty was that as an administrator he could not legislate unless there was strong and clearly expressed public opinion. I suggested that he should insist upon the opponents of reform accepting one of my proposals. They could not entrench themselves behind an

ancient custom if it was, as this was, contrary to humanity and public morals.

SATYAGRAHI'S DUTY

Here the matter rests for the time being. The satyagrahis hold the result in the hollow of their hands. They must continue without fatigue, without despair, without anger or irritation and with forbearance towards the opponents and the Government. By their dignified bearing and patient suffering they will break down the iron wall of prejudice and they will stimulate and draw public opinion towards them and will force the hands of the Government if the orthodoxy itself does not yield to their gentle treatment.

Young India, 26-3-1925

222. A CORRECTION

I wrote the other day[1] about a spinning class being opened in Seva Sadan. The sister who wrote to me says it was not Seva Sadan she referred to. It was the Sarasvat Hall where the class was to be opened. I am sorry for the error.

Young India, 26-3-1925

223. STONING TO DEATH

My brief note[2] on the penalty of stoning to death awarded against certain members of the Ahmadiya community has resulted in a great deal of correspondence on the subject. I am unable to print all the correspondence. But I am printing enough to put the reader in possession of the views of my correspondents. Here is what Maulana Zafar Ali Khan has to say in the matter.

> I hasten to fulfil the promise which I made in my last letter to deal at some length with the controversial points arising out of your note on the stoning of certain *Qadianis* in Kabul. I have read the note over and over again and each successive study has strengthened me in the conviction that as President of the National Congress and above all in your personal capacity you had better left it unwritten. I reproduce the passages, which to my mind are open to exception:

[1] *Vide* "Notes", 5-3-1925, sub-title, "An Oasis in the Desert".

[2] *Vide* "Notes", 26-2-1925, sub-title "Stoning to Death". Subsequently, Gandhiji wrote on the subject in "My Crime", 5-3-1925 and in "Notes", 12-3-1925, sub-title, "No Stoning in Koran".

"I understand that the stoning method is enjoined in the Koran only in certain circumstances which do not cover the cases under observation. But as a human being living in fear of God, I should question the morality of the method under any circumstance whatsoever. Whatever may have been necessary or permissible during the Prophet's lifetime and in that age this particular form of penalty cannot be defended on the mere ground of its mention in the Koran. Every formula of every religion has in this age of reason to submit to the acid test of reason and universal justice if it is to ask for universal assent. Error can claim no exemption even if it can be supported by the scriptures of the world. . . . It is the form of penalty that wounds the human conscience. Both reason and heart refuse to reconcile themselves to torture for any crime no matter how vile the crime may be."

The opening lines of the above extract are open to correction. The Koran nowhere prescribes stoning to death as a penalty for any crime and you have erroneously attributed to it a statement which has no basis in fact. This is, however, a very trivial affair as compared with the attitude taken up by you that any form of penalty which according to your standard of morality is unacceptable to you must be condemned as inhuman even if it is supported by the Koran and all the other scriptures of the world. This means that the Koran as a source of Islamic law must be looked upon as a bundle of errors because it "wounds the human conscience" by ordaining the punishment of flogging for adultery and mutilation in respect of theft. I would not mind in the least if such sweeping statements emanated from the unsympathetic critics of Islam with whom we are only too familiar. But your position is quite different. As President of the National Congress you occupy the proud position of the head of the three hundred million Indians who expect you to respect their beliefs. As Mahatma Gandhi, the champion of Khilafat, millions of Mussalmans have grown accustomed to regard you as their "guide, philosopher and friend". Your categorical denunciation, therefore, of a peculiar aspect of the penal provisions of the *Shariat* was most unexpected; and Mussalmans whose susceptibilities in matters concerning the fundamentals of their faith are extremely delicate, naturally look upon the expression of such views as an uncalled for interference in an affair which concerns themselves alone. You have certainly the right of personally holding any opinion as to the validity of the moral sanction of penalties imposed by Islam on such of its followers as transgress its law. But a public expression of this opinion, in what very much looks like the capacity of a Muslim jurisconsult makes your illustrious position rather awkward, and it is my solicitude for your prestige throughout the Islamic world that has prompted me to address you in this manner.

I now turn to the main point at issue. The Koran as a penal code has prescribed punishment only in respect of a limited number of crimes, viz., murder, adultery, theft and slander of chaste women. Punishment for other offences has been left to the discretion of the Prophet whose lifelong practice forms the basis of the legislative activities of his successors. Full latitude for the exercise of independent judgment has been conceded to the latter where the Prophet's authority is not forthcoming. Thus the Koran as the word of God, the practice of the Prophet, the first and infallible interpreter of the revealed book, and the collective judgment of the Islamic world constitute the *Shariat*, and no Mussalman who is worth his salt dare impugn its authority.

Now apostasy, as such, is an offence punishable with death under the *Shariat*; and although the Koran is silent on the subject, the other two sources of the Islamic law have announced in unmistakable language that an apostate must forfeit his life. I have dealt exhaustively with this subject in a series of articles which I am writing for the *Zamindar.*

To people who have been dazzled by the glamour of modern scepticism, this unrelenting attitude of Islam towards apostasy might seem a direct challenge to the freedom of human conscience, whatever that expression may connote. These gentry should, however, remember that Islam is not only an institution for the guidance of those who profess it but a State which must exact allegiance from its subjects. If a British Indian subject can be hanged for infringing Section 121 of the Indian Penal Code and cannot escape such fate on the plausible plea that he is at liberty to shake off King George's allegiance, surely it stands to reason, on similar grounds, that a Mussalman who rebels against the overlordship of Islam should pay for the act with his life.

The question now is whether capital punishment in the case of an apostate should or should not take the form of stoning. I will cut short this discussion in one word. Forms of punishment are always regulated by the cultural stage of a people. Legislators in every age have obeyed this psychological necessity. Even the British Government which prides itself on its humanitarianism has been forced to enact the notorious Frontier Crimes Regulation in the North-West Frontier Province, which it would not think of promulgating in the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh. The Kabul Government is following the same natural law in stoning to death a number of *Quadianis* who have been proved guilty of high treason not only against the spiritual but the temporal power of Islam.

Maulana M. Safdar writing from Sialkot says:

I have read your note "Stoning to Death" in the *Young India* dated 26th February, as well as the rejoinder by Maulvi Zafar Ali Khan as pub-

lished in the *Zamindar* dated 4th March. I am afraid any controversy might lead to misunderstandings and the point in issue should be cleared at once. As you have stated Koran enjoins the punishment of *Rajam*, i.e., stoning to death, nowhere. The word *Rajam* is only twice mentioned in the Koran. Firstly in *Sura Had* where the people of Midian tell their Prophet, "O Shuaib! We do not understand much of what you say and most surely we see you to be weak among us, and were it not for your family we would surely *stone* you and you are not mighty against us". (*Sura Had*, verse 91, page 470-M. Mohammed Ali's translation). Secondly in *Sura* "The Cave" where one of the dwellers in the cave goes to the market to purchase food with a coin hundreds of years old and is told by the provision seller, "For surely if they (i.e., Government) prevail against you they would *stone* you to death or force you back to their religion and then you will never succeed" (*Sura* "The Cave", verse 20, page 591-M. Mohammed Ali's translation). This will show that the word *Rajam* is mentioned only in the course of references to the ancient history and is not at all enjoined by the Koran as a punishment. I feel, you are right in saying that the present human morality cannot stand this barbarous penalty and in saying this you by no means contravene the teaching of the Koran and thus wound the religious susceptibilities of the Mussalmans. I fear, M. Zafar Ali Khan is not right in qualifying *Rajam* as Islamic *Shariat*. Koran does not support him and opinions differ as to what later Muslim jurists hold it to be.

Khwaja Kamaluddin, head of the Muslim Mission at Woking, says:

The Koran proposes no punishment whatsoever for apostasy, on this side of the grave. The Book advocates absolute freedom of conscience in matters of religion and prohibits all sorts of compulsion in this respect. I have directed my office (Lahore) to send you a copy of my book *India in the Balance* which I wrote sometime in 1922; in it you will find a chapter on the subject as an appendix. You have read the Koran, and I am afraid you made a mistake in saying that the Koran proposes punishment of stoning to death. Will you kindly refer to the Verse as well, when you write on the subject again. I fail to see anything like that in the Book. Apostasy occurred in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet in many cases, but no punishment was awarded to anyone, solely for it. No tradition can abrogate the Koran. The Holy Prophet said, "You will hear many sayings ascribed to me; if they are according to the Koran they are from me; if they are not according to the Koran they are not from me." This is the only test with us to find the truth of what has been ascribed to our Prophet as his traditions.

I am very glad to find that there is no penalty of stoning to death in the Koran. I did not say that there positively was. I said, "I understand that the stoning method &c . . ." But Maulana Zafar Ali Khan whilst saying that the penalty is not prescribed in the Koran energetically argues that it has nevertheless a place in Islam and gives it his support. To me, an outsider, it is the same thing so long as a particular practice is part of Islamic practice whether it is defended on the basis of "the practice of the Prophet" or "the collective judgment of the Islamic world". What I would like my Mussalman friends to do is unhesitatingly to condemn, irrespective of its source, what the world's reasoned opinion rejects as contrary to humanity. I am glad, therefore, that Maulana Safdar and Khwaja Kamaluddin condemn the penalty of stoning altogether, and that of death at all, for apostasy. I wish that they could say with me that even if it could be established that the practice of stoning to death could be proved to be derived from the Prophet's practice or "the collective judgment of the Islamic world", they could not defend it as being repugnant to their sense of humanity. I would relieve the Maulana of his anxiety for my "prestige throughout the Islamic world". It would not be worth a day's purchase if it could be reduced to a nullity on account of an honest expression of my opinion about practices defended in the name of Islam. But the fact is, I have no desire for prestige anywhere. It is furniture required in courts of kings. I am a servant of Mussalmans, Christians, Parsis and Jews as I am of Hindus. And a servant is in need of love, not prestige. That is assured to me so long as I remained a faithful servant. And I would ask the Maulana to transfer his anxiety to the prestige of Islam. And I shall share his burden. In my opinion he has unconsciously diminished that prestige by his defence of an indefensible practice. No amount of casuistry can defend the penalty of stoning to death in any event or that of death, whether by stoning or otherwise, for apostasy.

My own position is clear. In my writing about Islam I take the same care of its prestige that I do of Hinduism. I apply the same method of interpretation to it that I apply to Hinduism. I no more defend on the mere ground of authority a single text in the Hindu scriptures than I can defend one from the Koran. Everything has to submit to the test of reason. Islam appeals to people because it appeals also to reason. And in the long run it will be found that any other method would land one in trouble. There are undoubtedly things in the world which transcend reason. We do not refuse to bring them on the anvil of reason but they

will not come themselves. By their very nature they defy reason. Such is the mystery of the deity. It is not inconsistent with reason, it is beyond it. But stoning to death is no more beyond reason than, say, the practice of honesty or of swearing. Taken in its broadest sense apostasy means "abandonment of one's religion". Is that a grievous crime meriting the punishment of death? If it is, reconversion of a Hindu convert to Islam is a step involving capital punishment. The Maulana Saheb's suggestion that I should not ciriticize any act in Islam or say anything of the Koran because I am President of the Congress and friend of Mussalmans is, I am afraid, unacceptable. I should be unworthy of either position if at a critical moment I suppressed my own judgment. The stoning incident is a matter with which every publicist is concerned. It is a matter of public morality and general humanity which is the basis of all true religions.

Young India, 26-3-1925

224. *TELEGRAM TO MADAN MOHAN MALAVIYA*

BOMBAY,
March 26, 1925

PANDIT M. M. MALAVIYA
BIRLA MILL
DELHI

PROPOSE CALLING COW-PROTECTION MEETING BOMBAY 22ND APRIL. PLEASE WIRE SABARMATI IF THAT WILL SUIT.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

225. *TELEGRAM TO SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI*

March 26, 1925

SIR PRABHASHANKER PATTANI
BHAVNAGAR

REACHING ASHRAM TOMORROW. LEAVING SAME FOR KATHIAWAR TUESDAY.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

226. *TELEGRAM TO RANCHHODLAL PATWARI*

March 26, 1925

RANCHHODLAL PATWARI[1]
MORVI

REACHING ASHRAM TOMORROW. LEAVING SAME FOR KATHIAWAR TUESDAY. WIRE ASHRAM WHETHER WE CAN MEET ANYWHERE.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

227. *TELEGRAM TO JAYASHANKER WAGHJI*

March 26, 1925

JAYASHANKER WAGHJI
PASSENGER BOMBAY MAIL

IMPOSSIBLE STAY BOMBAY. PLEASE STOP AHMEDABAD. MEET THERE TOMORROW.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S. N. 2456

228. *TELEGRAM TO VALLABHBHAI PATEL*

March 26, 1925

VALLABHBHAI PATEL
AHMEDABAD

DETAIN AHMEDABAD JAYASHANKER WAGHJI OF JAMNAGAR TRAVELLING TONIGHT'S MAIL FOR BOMBAY. ASK HIM STOP AHMEDABAD MEET ME TOMORROW.

GANDHI

From a handwritten draft: S.N. 2456

[1] Life-long friend of Gandhiji; served as Dewan in the Princely States of Western India

229. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Chaitra Sud 2 [March 26, 1925][1]

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Here is Hakim Saheb's telegram. Can you send me Rs. 25,000[2] now? If you can, will you send it to Hakim Saheb's address or to Jamnalalji's firm in Bombay? If it could be credited at Delhi some commission might perhaps be saved. I shall be at the Ashram till the 1st of April; after that I shall be proceeding to Kathiawar again. I have got to reach Faridpur on May 2.

I hope your wife is quite well.

I intend to take up the work of cow-protection on my own lines, or rather I will have to take it up. I expect to receive help in this work from all of you brothers. I have agreed to take up this work after much hesitation.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6108. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

230. INTERVIEW TO "THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE"

BOMBAY,
March 26, 1925

What about your mission to Vykom? Was it a success?

It was neither a success nor a failure. It was not a success because the roads are not yet thrown open, not a failure because I believe that success is near if the satyagrahis remain true to their faith.

But in your offers, contrary to your wont, have you not put a common right of humanity in jeopardy by making it subservient to the opinion of a class, which is presumably opposed to your contention, or to Shastric authority?

I do not think I have done any such thing, because the caste Hindu opinion, if I am correctly informed by my co-workers, is overwhelmingly in favour of reform. The original satyagraha is

[1] From the reference to cow-protection and second visit to Kathiawar, the letter appears to belong to 1925.

[2] For Aligarh; *vide* "Letter to G. D. Birla", 30-3-1925.

based upon the assumption that the opinion of caste Hindus is in favour of reform. Such being the case, when the orthodox party suggested that the opinion was not in favour of the reform and when I knew that the Government wanted an unequivocal expression of that opinion, I was bound to suggest a referendum in order to satisfy ignorant but honest orthodoxy. I was bound to suggest the reference to learned shastris as I knew in the matter of use of public roads there was no authority at all to suggest the contention. It must be understood that the contention of the Government is that the law in Travancore is against the reformers. It is, therefore, necessary for the Government to pass new legislation if there is orthodox opposition. How far this contention is correct, I do not know, but I had to reckon with it.

What about the future of satyagraha?

I expect Government to take the next natural step to adopt one of the suggestions made by me, whether with or without the concurrence of the orthodox party.

The Bombay Chronicle, 27-3-1925

231. SPEECH AT WOMEN'S MEETING, BOMBAY[1]

March 26, 1925

Gandhiji said the yarn spun here was not of the requisite quality and fineness but the fault was their own, for the high hopes they had first entertained when they had met in such large numbers on the Chowpatty some four years ago were not fulfilled. He wanted 40s and higher counts if they were to supply their personal requirements as far as cloth was concerned. He had 800 counts spun in this country, and it was such fine yarn that made the Dacca mulls possible. He asked the women of Bombay to make it possible for him to realize the high hopes he had entertained in regard to khadi and spinning. He had recently toured in Southern India and had been even to Kanyakumari and had seen all sorts of people from the Maharani of Travancore downwards and he was glad to tell them that the Maharani had promised him to wear nothing but khadi, and also to spin yarn. He had seen evidence for himself that in Travancore, until a few years ago, every household spun its own yarn and made its own cloth. In Cochin the royal family was wearing khadi and also spun yarn. But how many of the women who were there that day were wearing khaddar? He fully realized that the people of Bombay could not well realize the importance of the spinning-wheel—they who spent money so

[1] Under the auspices of the Rashtriya Stree Sabha at the Congress House, Girgaum. Sarojini Naidu presided.

heedlessly. But the famine-stricken men and women of Orissa who looked like mere bundle of bones, did realize the importance of khadi and the charkha. Even these starving people of Orissa had helped him with their offerings when he had been there to make collections for the Tilak Swaraj Fund. To starving people like these, the charkha was of greater importance than to the women of Bombay. Mrs. Naidu had informed him that the Begum of Bhopal had ordered a lot of khaddar for her use. The reason why he asked Begums and rich men and women to devote a small portion of their time to spinning was in order that they might bring themsleves to the level of the poor in this country and realize to some extent at least their trials and tribulations. In this connection he said those who endowed *sadavrat*[1] for the poor were really committing sin, although unintentionally.

Why were so many lakhs of able-bodied men in this country, who were well able to earn an honest livelihood, starving and loafing? It was because they had no work and could not find any work. At best the mills in India could employ a few lakhs, but not the many crores who were there starving and workless. He did not ask the women to give him any money for these people, but to dedicate at least 30 minutes a day to spinning for the sake of the starving masses. Let them wear khaddar for the sake of these poor men and women; they must give up all foreign cloth, even mill-cloth, and until they did so, they could not be free, could not have swaraj and *Ramarajya*. He invited the women of Bombay to take part in the national functions which would be held in the Congress House, which would be the centre of all national activities in this city. The women of Bombay had given him much, but he asked them to give him something more for the country and that was half-an hour daily devoted to spinning.

The Bombay Chronicle, 27-3-1925

232. SPEECH AT MEETING OF DEPRESSED CLASSES, BOMBAY[2]

March 26, 1925

The Mahatma said it was unnecessary for him to tell them all he wanted to do, or had already done, for the abolition of untouchability from this land, and while he admitted that untouchability was fast disappearing from India, he regretted that the pace was not fast enough for him. They knew in Vykom satyagraha was being performed by the untouchables in order to assert their

[1] Alms or charity

[2] An address of welcome praising Gandhiji's services for the removal of untouchability was presented. S. V. Puntambekar translated the speech into Marathi.

right to walk in a street adjoining the temple. These untouchables were offering satyagraha with a view to bringing round to reason those Hindus who in their bigotry had become blind to all real principles of Hindu religion. It was to open the eyes of these caste Hindus that the untouchables in Vykom were offering satyagraha. Gandhiji hoped their efforts would prove successful in the end. These people were performing *tapascharya*, sacrifice, in order to convince the caste Hindus of their mistaken notions. These untouchables had a great spiritual leader, Narayan Guru, who had promised him not to allow any of his followers to approach him without wearing khaddar. If the young boys in the audience could not understand his Hindi speech, he could only bless them and wish them a long life, which he hoped they would spend in the service of their country, in good deeds, in truthfulness and in fearlessness. They should fear no man, and fearing none, serve their country. He also asked them to give up drink.

The Bombay Chronicle, 27-3-1925

233. *SPEECH AT OPENING OF CONGRESS HOUSE, BOMBAY*

March 26, 1925

Gandhiji after congratulating the winners of the medals[1] said the work for which they had gathered there was a blessed one. But before opening the House they must fully realize their responsibility. The national flag was a mere piece of khaddar with a charkha on it, yet they loved it immensely, and it symbolized their hopes and pride. The hoisting of the flag meant something more than the mere ceremony signified. In this country at the present time there was suspicion among the different communities towards each other. In the South, the Hindus were fighting with each other. From the prayers said there by the representatives of various communities, they would find that they contained the same eternal truth about the great God pervading everywhere. If they but realized that all religions were great and must be honoured and respected as such, and that they must tolerate each other, the object of such a ceremony would be realized. Once the flag was hoisted, it should never be lowered whatever happened, even if they all died for it. If the man who was holding it aloft fell stricken down, then the next man must take it from his hands and never allow it to die in the dust. The flag was the embodiment of all that they cherished and honoured. With the hoisting of the flag, Gandhiji said, the House would be opened by him. The House was purchased out of the Tilak Swaraj Fund, to which Bombay was the largest contributor. The House was consecrated to the Congress

[1] In the spinning competition organized by the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee before the function

work, and he asked them all to take advantage of the building. He then prayed to God to make their hearts clean, that they might bear no ill will towards each other, that they might serve the country, that the flag which they had hoisted that day would never be lowered, and that the members of the Congress would bear no ill will towards their countrymen.

Gandhiji then walked up to the flagstaff and slowly unfurled the national banner and hoisted it amidst loud cries of *Vandemataram*.

The Bombay Chronicle, 27-3-1925

234. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

March 27, 1925

MY DEAREST CHARLIE,

I am so sorry about Gurudev. I do hope he is not so ill as your letter leads me to think.

I understand your remarks about birth-control. I have been drawn into the controversy now. You will therefore see the thing developing in *Young India*.

I am quite sure that Banarasidas's[1] going to East Africa will do no good. It will if he could stay there for some time.

With love,

Yours,
MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 963

235. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Chaitra Sud 3 [March 28, 1925][2]

Why do you say that my report[3] has become lame[4]? What is it that I have left out? Did you not see my first one? But even if I seem to be obtuse, I shall be satisfied if all of you who have understood the position will retain the spirit of justice and non-violence while remaining firm in your convictions.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 76

[1] Banarasidas Chaturvedi (b. 1892); journalist and writer; professor of Hindi, 1921-25, Gujarat Mahavidyalaya, a constituent college of the Gujarat Vidyapith

[2] As in the source

[3] On Hindu-Muslim riots in the country, specially in Kohat

[4] According to the addressee, he had described the report as "dry" but Gandhiji misread the word to mean "lame".

236. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Chaitra Sud 3 [March 28, 1925][1]

I was unhappy because I could not meet Anand[2] this time, but I was helpless. Next time when I come, I shall certainly see her.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 80

237. TELEGRAM TO "ENGLISHMAN"[3]

SABARMATI,
[After *March 29, 1925*]

WITHOUT CONSULTATION WITH DESHBANDHU DAS AND UNDERSTANDING THE IMPLICATIONS I HESITATE TO MAKE ANY STATEMENT BUT GENERALLY I CAN SAFELY SAY THAT CO-OPERATION WITH ALL PARTIES ANY DAY IS POSSIBLE ON HONOURABLE TERMS.

The Bombay Chronicle, 3-4-1925

[1] The year and month as in the source

[2] Anandbehn, Gandhiji's sister's daughter

[3] In reply to the *Englishman*'s telegram requesting Gandhiji for his views on C. R. Das's manifesto published on March 29 which had said: "Apprehension has gained considerable ground in the minds of Europeans in India and Great Britain that Swaraj Party has encouraged and is encouraging political assassinations and intimidation. . . . I am opposed on principle to political assassinations and violence in any shape or form. It is absolutely abhorrent to me and to my Party. I consider it an obstacle to our political progress. . . . I am equally opposed to and equally abhor any form of repression by the Government. . . . We are determined to secure swaraj and political equality of India on terms of equality and honourable partnership in the Empire."

238. THE "DARSHAN" OF KANYAKUMARI

India's frontiers extend from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and from Karachi to Assam. These are the four corners of India. The summit of Hindukush is her crest, the strength and beauty of Mother India. At the base, the pure waters of the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal wash her feet. Kanyakumari is no other than Parvati[1] who practised penance in order to be united in marriage with Siva, the Lord Supreme transcending all worldly attachments. We see the ocean on all three sides of Kanyakumari as it is on the tip of India. Since there is a confluence of two waters, two tints are visible here. As we face due south, we can see from the very same spot the sun rise to our left and set to our right. We did not have the time to witness that spectacle; nevertheless, we could imagine the sun rising at dawn after a bath in the great Bay of Bengal, robbing the stars of their brightness, and, in the evening, going down the golden sky and retiring for rest into the western ocean full of gems. The watchman of the State guest-house there tried his best to persuade us to stay on to see the majestic sunset, but how could we, who were astride a horse, or rather a car, stay on to enjoy such bliss? I had to be content with having my feet purified in the waves of the ocean sanctified through washing the feet of Mother India.

What a magnificent structure the *rishis* have raised! What a sense of beauty the *Puranis* had! Here on the tip of India, which is the end of our world, the *rishis* built the temple of Kanyakumari and the authors of Puranas beautified it with pictures. I had no desire to enjoy the beauty of nature, although it fills the place to overflowing. For my part, I drank in here the nectar of the mystery of religion. When I was still dipping my feet in the ocean on the beautiful ghat there, one of my companions said to me: "Vivekananda used to go and meditate on the hill over there." Whether he in fact did so or not, he could have done it. A good swimmer could swim to that spot. There could not but be perfect peace on that island promontory. The music of the ocean-waves, sweet and gentle like strains from a *vina*[2], could only invite one to meditation. Hence my religious yearning grew stronger. Adjoining the steps is a raised plaform on which a

[1] Siva's consort

[2] Indian string instrument

hundred persons could sit with ease. I felt like sitting down there and reciting the *Gita*. Finally, however, I suppressed even that sacred desire and sat in silence, my heart filled with the image of the teacher of the *Gita*.

Having thus sanctified ourselves, we went to the temple. As I am a crusader for the abolition of untouchability and call myself a *Bhangi*, there was some doubt whether I could enter the temple. I told the man in charge of the temple not to take me anywhere where he felt that I had no right to go. I would respect those restrictions. He said that the Goddess's *darshan* could be had only after half-past five and that we had come at four o'clock. However, he would show us everything else. The restriction imposed on us was only with respect to approaching the sanctuary where the Goddess is installed. That, however, applied to all who had been abroad. I replied that I would gladly abide by it. After this conversation, the man in charge led me within and took me round the place.

I did not pity the ignorance of the idolatrous Hindu, but, on the contrary, realized his wisdom. By discovering the way of image-worship, he has not multiplied the one God into many, but realized the fact and shown it to the world that man can worship—and he will continue to worship—God in His diverse forms. Although the Christians and the Muslims do not regard themselves as idolators, nevertheless, those who worship their ideals are also image-worshippers. A mosque or a church also involved a form of image-worship. Imagining that one can become more holy only by going to these places is a form of idol-worship, and there is no harm in such belief. Even the faith that God is revealed only in the Koran or the Bible is idol-worship and an innocent one. The Hindu goes further and says that everyone should worship God in the form he likes. Even a person who makes an idol of stone or gold or silver and after attributing divinity to it, purifies himself by meditating on it, will be fully qualified to attain *moksha*. While circumambulating the temple, all this became clearer to me.

However, even there my happiness was not untainted by sorrow. I was allowed to make a complete circle, but I was not permitted to go to the inner shrine because I had been to England. The restriction imposed on untouchables, however, was due to the fact of their birth. How can this be tolerated? Could Kanyakumari be polluted? Has this practice been followed since ancient times? My inner voice cried out that this could not be. Moreover, if it had been, it would be sinful. That which is

sinful does not cease to be so or become meritorious through its antiquity. Hence, I was all the more convinced that it was the duty of every Hindu to make a mighty effort to remove this stigma.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 29-3-1925

239. THE COMING WEEK

Is it possible to forget the 6th or the 13th of April? On the 6th of April 1919, the people had a new birth; on the 13th of that month they performed a human sacrifice in which hundreds laid down their lives. It is true that the sacrifice was unplanned and enforced. Nevertheless, it undoubtedly deserved the name. In the carnage at Jallianwala Bagh, the blood of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs mingled freely. Those who seemed separate while alive, became one in death. Hindus and Muslims may fight and wrestle, may kill and be killed. Such disputes will be forgotten; but will the event of Jallianwala Bagh be ever forgotten? Its memory will remain fresh so long as India exists. Hence these two dates cannot be forgotten.

What should we do this year? The days of hartals are over. These have value no longer. Moreover, today public enthusiasm is too low to support such moves. Hartals would not be appropriate so long as Hindus and Muslims are full of bitterness. However, those who look upon national service as a part of their dharma, those who desire to secure swaraj through peaceful and pure means alone, should fast for half a day or observe *roza*[1] on that day. They should specially meditate and worship God on that day, purify their hearts and participate in the present programme of the Congress.

Although these three tasks are important, they cannot be taken up simultaneously. Hence I would suggest that those who spin should spin more during that week, those who have not yet given up foreign cloth should do so and urge others to do so. Then again, during that week propaganda for khadi should be given special impetus, so much so that no stocks of khadi should remain unsold in any of the Congress Khadi Bhandars. All people should shed the bitterness in their minds towards others and every Hindu should serve the *Antyajas* in one form or another during this week. Those who cannot do anything in particular should, at any rate, contribute some money for the service of the *Antyajas*.

[1] Fast among Muslims

Some may ask how the cause of swaraj is served by such trivial tasks. Those who do so could not have fully thought things out. If they do so, they will realize that, apart from this, there is nothing else to be done for swaraj at the moment. Swaraj may not be secured by merely doing this, but without this it can never, never, never be secured. Should anyone who lacks faith humorously ask me what is proved by repeating "never" thrice, the answer is that by doing so I do not wish to prove the worthiness of the cause, but only to express my firm conviction and my determination.

As a matter of fact, no doubts should arise about the need for the three things mentioned above. All these three assume supreme importance and become inseparable parts of the Congress programme because of the knowledge and the enthusiasm aroused during that week in 1919. The pledges regarding swadeshi, Hindu-Muslim unity and the abolition of untouchability were taken on that very occasion. It immediately became apparent that swadeshi meant the spinning-wheel and khadi. Rules were framed for the spread of the spinning-wheel. How can we, therefore, doubt today what we have regarded as an essential part of the activity for swaraj?

Supposing, however, that we had been mistaken? If so, we should certainly rectify the errors. The Congress, however, not only has not regarded it as such, but has also passed resolutions to encourage the programme. There is, therefore, no room for considering it a mistake.

One doubt alone remains to be considered now. Non-co-operation is suspended, civil disobedience is suspended. What is the use of khadi, etc., now? This argument is like a bad workman quarrelling with his tools. If we have realized that civil disobedience is impossible without these things, how then can we put forward such an argument? If I claim that there can be no civil disobedience without the threefold programme of khadi, etc., and if the public claims that the latter is not possible without the former, we would be placed in the same situation as the oilman's bullock[1]. However, that man or woman who does not get involved in this circular argument, but rather follows the straight thread of the yarn, will continue to progress and will never lose his way during the journey because the thread will be his guide. He need not look this side or that. Hence there is no danger of his losing his way.

If, during the journey, he carries with him food in the form of Hindu-Muslim unity, etc., there is no danger of hunger, etc., for

[1] Going round and round in a circle

him. If perhaps he does not take that food with him, his fasting, that is, his penance will generate the food for him.

During his journey, he will pass through the gardens of prohibition and other social services, will roam there, and end the suffering of those who are addicted to liquor by pointing out the straight way of the yarn, and make companions of the ex-addicts who will have purified themselves through *prayaschitta*[1].

On the way, he will meet many skeletons who though alive are as good as dead. On seeing his yarn they will dance, and, seeing his wheel, they too will want to work it, and by infusing blood into their skeletons, they will save themselves from the clutches of death and contribute their offering to the sacrificial-fire of swaraj. I request every one of my brothers and sisters to perform this fine sacrifice next week.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-3-1925

240. A GOLDEN GARDEN

Travancore is not a province. It is like a large city. Its citizens do not live in flats with the walls of one touching those of another, as the citizens of Bombay do. They live in their beautiful single-storeyed houses with thatched roofs, a mile or a little less apart from one another and surrounded by their own fields and gardens. I have not seen the like of this anywhere except in Malabar and the region of Kerala which surrounds it. Travancore is like a beautiful garden or an orchard. One comes across coconut, banana, pepper and mango trees everywhere. The coconut trees, however, hide all the rest. The traveller passes through these groves. There are two modes of travel. One can travel in boats by way of canals and backwaters or by road in a car. The railway too is there, but it serves only a very few areas. The view on the backwaters is magnificent. Both the shores are, of course, visible. Moreover, all the year round, as far as the eye can see, there stretches an endless garden on both shores. I have described it as a golden garden. If anyone looks at these gardens before sunset while journeying on the backwaters, the trees appear to have golden leaves. The sun peeps through these leaves and looks like a revolving mount of gold. Man would never get tired of looking at it and singing the praises of God's

[1] Atonement

creation. No painter can paint such a scene. Who can paint a scene that changes every moment and grows ever more beautiful? Man's handiwork appears insignificant by the side of it. Moreover, millions of men can see this scene free of cost.

After having seen the sights in Travancore and Assam I feel that there is no need for Indians to go abroad in search of natural beauty. For salubrious climate, we have in India mountains like the Himalayas, the Nilgiris and Mount Abu. How is it that people are not happy in such a beautiful country where anyone can get the climate that he wants? Or, in the words of the late Shri Malbari[1], how can man develop the capacity to see or know anything of foreign lands so long as he has not appreciated the beauty of the history and geography of his own home, his own street, his own town and his own country? Until then, he has no standard of comparison and hence he sees nothing though he has eyes. Just as tailors, cobblers and such other persons cannot take measurements without a tape, similarly, a lover of nature cannot appreciate other countries even though he sees them, if he has no knowledge of his motherland. To him only those things at which he looks with wide eyes and open mouth are beautiful, or else he merely repeats what others have written about those countries.

I found that what is true of the natural beauty of Travancore is also true of its government. Its motto is: "Dharma is verily our strength." I have not seen such roads anywhere else in India. There seemed to be no disorder in the State. For the past many years the rulers have not harassed the subjects. The Ruler does not disregard any rules or laws. The Maharaja of Travancore is always the offspring of a marriage between a Brahmin and a Kshatriya. The late Maharaja was looked upon as a devout and learned man. Travancore has had a legislative assembly for many years. There are large numbers of Hindus, Muslims and Christians in Travancore. Of the population of above forty-six lakhs, almost a half are Christians. It seemed that everyone found employment without any discrimination. The people can freely express their views. There is hardly any part of the country where education is as widespread as in Travancore. And this is true of girls as well as of boys. A good proportion of the State's revenue is spent on education. It is difficult to come across illiterate men and women in Travancore. There is a special college for

[1] Behramji Merwanji Malbari (1854-1912); poet, author and social reformer

women in its capital Trivandrum. Not only are the untouchables permitted to join any school and any department but a certain sum is spent on them every year.

MAHARANIS

I saw the dowager Queen-mother who runs the Govrnment on behalf of the boy-king and the younger queen who is his mother. On meeting both of them I was delighted by their august simplicity. Both were clad exclusively in white garments. I could not see any ornaments on them except for a necklace of tiny black beads. They wore nothing on their ears or noses. I did not see any diamond or pearl rings on their fingers. I have never seen such simplicity even in middle class women. Their furniture was in keeping with their attire. When I compared the furniture of these Maharanis to that of our wealthy class, I felt pity for the latter. Why is it that we have become so luxury-loving?

I found that both the Maharanis were free from any ostentation. To me, the boy-Maharaja appeared very good-natured. I found that his dress consisted only of a shirt and a dhoti simply wrapped around the waist sash-like. I could see no special sign to denote his being a Maharaja. All these three things won my heart. It is possible that on closer acquaintance, I may find it necessary to qualify my description. I did ask others. No one contradicted the impression that I had. I do not suggest that the intrigues found in an average royal court do not exist there despite all this simplicity. It was certainly not my dharma to look for faults. I seek virtues and worship them. I am thrilled and dazzled when I find them. I like singing their praises. No one is without faults in this world. When I see these, I note them and feel sad and sometimes, if it is relevant, I speak of them with a heavy heart.

I would request those to whom God has given a little money to take a trip to Travancore and Cochin.

SIMPLICITY AND PEASANTS

As is the king, so are the subjects. I have not found such similarity between the dress of the ruler and the subjects anywhere else as I found here. The dress of the ruling class and the peasant class was almost the same. It is amongst the peasants that I found some variety in dress. One may come across a few highly educated persons wearing western clothes or some women dressed in silk saris; however, the common dress of the Malayalis consists of an untucked dhoti and a shirt. The women also wear the same

kind of dhoti, but one end of that dhoti serves as an upper garment, and of late a shirt or a blouse has been added.

Khadi can be easily introduced in these parts because women require neither dyeing nor any border, nor any great length like our sari or *ghaghra*[1]. Despite this, calico and nainsook have wrought ruin. Khadi has found its way after the recent struggle[2]. Nevertheless, there is no end to the number of spinners and weavers in these parts. In the vicinity of Kanyakumari there is a village called Nagarcoil where hand-spun yarn is sold at a regular weekly market.

SATYAGRAHA AT VYKOM

How is it that untouchability is practised with such fanaticism in a region where there is so much education, where there is good government and where the people have many rights? This is the beauty of an ancient custom. It seems even ignorance passes off as knowledge when it receives the sanction of tradition. I even met persons here who sincerely believed that Christians might use roads near temples but the untouchables should not; not even a barrister or a lawyer of that class should be allowed to pass by. There is an untouchable swami here who performs the *sandhya*[3] and such other rites. He has a good knowledge of Sanskrit and dresses like a sannyasi. He has thousands of disciples. He owns thousands of acres of land and has established an Advait Ashram. Even he cannot pass by the roads near temples. How well-protected are these temples! They are surrounded by six feet high walls. Around these are roads on which even bullock-carts move. And yet, no untouchable is allowed to pass that way. Satyagraha is being offered in Vykom to end such ignorance, such injustice. I met and talked courteously with the *sanatanis* who defend this practice. They put forward many arguments to support it, but I found them insubstantial. Finally, I made three suggestions, and agreed to withdraw the satyagraha if any of them was accepted, irrespective of the outcome being unfavourable to the demands of the satyagrahis. These gentlemen were not ready to accept even these suggestions. The agreement eventually arrived at a a result of a conference with the local police commissioner[4] has been given in Mahadev Desai's letter elsewhere.

[1] Petticoat worn low up to ankles

[2] Satyagraha in Vykom

[3] Morning and evening prayers with a set formula

[4] W. H. Pitt

Thus, the movement is at a standstill now. As my suggestions meet with the approval of the authorities, I hope that this struggle will soon come to a successful end. However, everything depends upon the true, that is, gentle persistence of the satyagrahis. I have an undeviating faith that the result will be nothing but good if they do not transgress the restrictions they have willingly accepted.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-3-1925

241. *MY RESPONSIBILITY*

I am often asked questions about the reports of my speeches appearing in newspapers. I find it impossible to answer them. I do not read newspapers, for I cannot. Much of my time is spent in travelling about, and my mail is also delayed because of that. I have also to make a good many speeches in the course of my tours. Placed in such an unenviable condition, I do not know whom to answer and whom not to. We have very few reporters in our country who can take down speeches in short hand. I have, therefore, hardly read a report of my speech which I have liked. One single word in place of another can distort the speaker's meaning. I would, therefore, request all friends that, if they come across anything in the reports of my speeches in newspapers which is contrary to my known views, they should assume that I did not say it. An effort is made to report in *Navajivan* everything in my speeches which is considered important enough to be preserved. Other things which I may have said were addressed to the audience and personally I do not mind if they are not preserved in print. Even those who place a high value on my views have no cause to feel sorry on this account. What does it matter whether or not reports of the same views and ideas, clothed in different language every time, are made available to them? What is more important at present is to digest what one reads or hears, and then act accordingly. Too much reading may even do harm rather than good.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 29-3-1925

242. MY NOTES

FOUR MARRIAGES

For want of time I have not been able to write, though I wanted to, about the three marriages which took place under my supervision and which, it may even be said, were solemnized by me on the premises of the Ashram in Dr. Pranjivandas Mehta's bungalow. However, as they are well worth knowing about, I am dealing with them here. It is not my function to arrange or encourage any marriage or to take part in one. Moreover, allowing marriages on the Ashram soil is not in keeping with its ideals. My dharma is to practise *brahmacharya* and persuade others to do so. Moreover, I look upon these times as difficult ones. I regard it as harmful for people to marry or multiply population during these difficult days. The duty of wise people now is to reduce enjoyments and encourage renunciation.

This is but one view of the matter. My wishes and my ideals are one thing. However, I would join, not to condemn, and in some cases would even approve, an act which is inevitable and also not altogether harmful and in which special stress is laid on the dharma of self-control and propagation of khadi.

These three marriages belonged to this class. I had previously also helped in celeberating two marriages of this kind—those of the two daughters of Imam Sahib[1], who lived with me and was like my own brother. I have always regarded these girls as my own daughters. One of the sisters, Fatima, died only a few years after her marriage. Amina was the other daughter. Imam Sahib and I were bound to get them married in accordance with their wishes. As much simplicity as possible was introduced into these marriages. In both of them, the bride and the bridegroom were, of course, dressed in khadi. Apart from intimate friends, no one else was invited. This time, one of the three marriages was that of a girl who had been brought up in the Ashram itself. The other was that of Shri Vallabhbhai's son[2] and the third, that of Dr. Mehta's son[3]. All the three were celebrated on the very same day and the ceremony took only one day. In each case, both the parties in

[1] Imam Abdul Kadir Bawazeer, a Muslim priest who took prominent part in satyagraha in South Africa and later lived with Gandhiji at Sabarmati

[2] *Vide* "Speech at Ahmedabad", 25-2-1925.

[3] *Vide* "Telegram to Arya, Rangoon", 26-2-1925.

the marriages used nothing but khadi. In the wedding ceremony there were no drums, *shehnai*, feasts, etc. There were neither invitation cards nor a large party consisting of the bridegroom's relations and friends. Some friends had come along as witnesses. Deliberately, not even sherbet was served to them.

Not only was a single step not omitted from the wedding ritual but, in addition, the vows that had to be taken were fully explained to the couples in Gujarati. The couples and their elders who performed the ceremony of *kanyadan*[1] had fasted in the customary fashion. In this manner, the couples embarking upon the journey of life were made aware of the fact that marriage, according to Hinduism, is for practising self-control and not for enjoyment. The ceremony was concluded with blessings on the couples and with the Ashram's prayer to God.

Of these three marriages, one should be given some special mention. The marriage of Shri Vallabhbhai's son, Shri Dahyabhai, with Shri Kashibhai's daughter, Yashoda, may be regarded as one of their own choice. The two selected each other and decided to get married after receiving permission from their parents. Both desired only to serve the country together. The future alone will show how long they will abide by this youthful desire. This could be regarded as an ideal marriage in the *Patidar* community. Both the families are well-known and Shri Kashibhai could have spent much money if he had wished to. Nevertheless, he deliberately decided to dispense with all expenses at the wedding. To some extent this incurred the wrath of other members of their caste. I expect other *Patidars* to have such marriages, and other castes too should do the same and free themselves from the burden of heavy expenses. This would relieve the poor, while the wealthy could use the money thus saved for serving the country or for religious purposes, according to their own wishes.

The fourth marriage took place at Jetpur between Shri Devchandbhai's daughter and Shri Trikamlal Shah of the Gujarat Vidyapith. Shri Devchandbhai insisted upon my attending it so that I could see how it was celebrated with the utmost simplicity[2] and that nothing but khadi would be found there, and the bride and bridegroom could receive my blessings. I gave in to his sincere and pressing invitation and attended the wedding. There were many men and women present there who had been invited by Devchandbhai's family. On the bridegroom's side, however, there

[1] Giving away the bride

[2] *Vide*, however, "My Notes", 19-4-1925, sub-title, "A Correction".

was no one except the bridegroom himself. Shri Trikamlal was determined to marry if he could find a worthy bride, with no more than a *tulsi*[1] leaf as dowry. He carried out that decision of his. The wedding ceremony ended with the bride giving away khadi clothes to the children of the *Antyajas* in their locality. In this marriage, too, music, songs, etc., were completely left out. My request to the *mahajans*[2] of Kathiawar is not to be enraged at such simplicity, but rather regard it as praiseworthy and propagate it. The era of large dinner parties should be regarded as having ended. Some practices should indeed change with every age. Just as winter clothes are useless in the summer, even so the customs of one age sometimes become useless and indeed harmful in another.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 29-3-1925

243. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

Chaitra Sud 6 [March 30, 1925][3]

CHI. VASUMATI,

Your letter. It appears you did not get my letter from the South to your Surat address. You were never out of my mind during the tour. I was keenly reminded of you while watching the scenery and while visiting the temple at Kanyakumari.

I am all right. I may stay for about eight days in Kathiawar. I have to come to Bombay for a couple of days in April.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 588. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

[1] A sacred plant tended in Indian homes
[2] Elders of the community
[3] From the reference to the visit to Kanyakumari, Kathiawar and Bombay

244. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Chaitra Shukla 6 [March 30, 1925][1]

BHAISHRI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter.

Your yarn is quite good. I hope you will never give up the sacred work you have taken up.

As regards your wife, you can take a vow that in case she dies you will strictly observe *ekapatnivrata*, i.e., the vow that you will not marry again. If you have the inclination and the strength to take this vow, I would advise you to do so before your wife.

As regards the amount of Rs. 20,000, I shall make enquiries from Jamnalalji's firm.

I had very close relations with Shri Raychandji[2]. I do not think he followed truth and non-violence with greater devotion than I, but I do believe that he far surpassed me in knowledge of the scriptures and retentiveness of memory. He had self-knowledge and self-confidence from his childhood. I know that he was not a *jivanmukta*[3] and he was himself conscious that he was not. But he was fast progressing in that direction. I know his views on Buddha and others. We shall talk about these things when we meet. My tour in Bengal begins in May.

I have already asked you for Rs. 25,000 for Aligarh. I have also sent you Hakimji's telegram.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6109. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

[1] From the references to the appeal for Rs. 25,000 for the Muslim University and the illness of the addressee's wife, it is evident that the letter belongs to 1925.

[2] A businessman, jeweller and *karmayogi* who profoundly influenced Gandhiji; *vide An Autobiography*, Pt. II, Ch. I.

[3] One who has attained deliverance in one's life

245. LETTER TO R. D. BIRLA

SATYAGRAHA ASHRAM,
SABARMATI,
Chaitra Shukla 6 [March 30, 1925][1]

BHAISHRI RAMESHWARDASJI,

I have your letter. When I get the Rs. 5,000, I shall spend the amount on the untouchables' welfare, as desired by you. No letter from Jamnalalji as yet. At present he is touring Rajputana for khadi propaganda.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

SJT. RAMESHWARDAS BIRLA
BIRLA HOUSE
RANCHI

From the Hindi original: C. W. 6122. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

246. VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

After the last lines on the Vykom affair were written for the last week's issue, I received a wire from Mr. Pitt, Commissioner of Police, Travancore. It was then too late to publish in *Young India* the correspondence between the Commissioner of Police and myself. The reader must, however, have seen the correspondence[2] in the Press. It makes a distinct advance in the reform aimed at. The correspondence shows unmistakably that the Travancore Government favour the reform and that they are also pledged to carry it out at the earliest opportunity. Let no one consider that in agreeing to a referendum or Shastric interpretation I have endangered the reform itself. The present campaign in its inception is based on the assumption that the reform is required by the vast majority of the caste Hindus and that the prohibition against the suppressed classes is not warranted by the genuine Hindu scriptures. For me, therefore, not to have made the proposals would have betrayed woeful lack of resourcefulness.

[1] The date is given on the presumption that Jamnalal Bajaj toured Rajasthan in 1925.

[2] *Vide* "Letter to Associated Press of India", 24-3-1925.

It was the most natural thing for a satyagrahi like myself to have made the proposals which, if they had proceeded from the orthodox party, I could not have honestly rejected. Indeed, I make bold to say that my proposals paved the way for the remarkable support the cause received everywhere, save among the very few members of the orthodox party. Had there been real opposition from the majority of caste Hindus, or had there been any doubt as to the Shastric endorsement of the reform, the satyagraha would have assumed a different shape altogether. It would have been then a movement for a change in the religion rather than the removal of an irreligious custom. Indeed, those who were in immediate charge of the movement never questioned the propriety of my proposals. I could not take any step without consultation with them and without their full concurrence. It now remains for the satyagrahis at Vykom to carry out the letter and the spirit of the agreement and for the caste Hindus to support the movement in the manner promised by them everywhere to ensure the speedy and successful ending of the struggle. The satyagrahis must fulfil the letter by not overstepping the boundary-line until a settlement is reached, or a crossing after due notice by me becomes necessary for furthering the object of the agreement. The spirit of it requires gentleness and utmost humility on the part of the satyagrahis. Their uniform courtesy towards the opponents of reform will break the edge of the opposition. They must regard the Government not as opposed to the reform but as pledged to carry it out at the earliest possible moment. I have not the slightest reason to doubt the word of Her Highness the Maharani Regent or the Dewan or the Commissioner of Police. The conduct of satyagrahis in the Ashram must be in correspondence with their bearing at the boundary-line. The Ashram must be a busy hive in which every member is ever found at his own allotted task. It must be a model of simplicity and sanitation. The members are pledged to the charkha work during all spare moments. The spinning, the carding and the weaving departments admit of considerable improvement. Every inmate should be an expert carder and spinner if everyone cannot also become an expert weaver. The members must insist on spinning and weaving at least the cloth required by them. They should also learn Hindi well. They are or should regard themselves as trustees for the prestige and dignity of Hinduism. Theirs is a fight not to end with the opening of the roads round temples but it should be considered to be the beginning of a glorious struggle for the purity of Hinduism and removal of the abuses that have crept into it.

They are not reformers who would take no note of the opposite side or would violate every sentiment of the orthodox people. They would vie with the tallest among the orthodox in purity of conduct and veneration for all that is good and noble in the Shastras. They would not disregard scriptural authority without the deepest thought, and to that end, some of them would even study Sanskrit and explore the possibilities of reform within the four corners of the scriptures. They will not be in a hurry, but having fearlessly taken all the steps that they can consistently with their creed of truth and non-violence, will have the patience and the faith of the *rishis* of old.

Entry into Temples

For, the opening of the roads is not the final but the first step in the ladder of reform. Temples in general, public wells, public schools must be open to the untouchables equally with the caste Hindus. But that is not the present goal of the satyagrahis. We may not force the pace. The schools are almost all open to the untouchables. The temples and the public wells or tanks are not. Public opinion should be carefully cultivated and the majority should be converted before the reform can be successfully carried out. Meanwhile, the remedy lies in founding temples and digging tanks or wells that would be open to the untouchables and to the other Hindus. I have no doubt that the movement for the removal of untouchability has made tremendous headway. Let us not retard it by indiscretion or over-zeal. Once the idea of pollution by the touch of a person by reason of his birth is gone, the rest is easy and bound to follow.

Young India, 2-4-1925

247. NOTES

Sikh Sacrifice

The Akali position still seems to be uncertain. In the resumè published by Sardar Mangal Singh in his capacity as President of the Central Sikh League occurs the following summary of the Sikh sacrifices:

> 30,000 arrested, 400 died and killed, 2,000 wounded, Rs. 15 lakhs of fine including forfeitures of pensions of retired soldiers.

If these figures are verifiable, they tell a tale of sacrifice which reflects the highest credit on Sikh courage and self-sacrifice,

and means equal discredit for a Government that has taken no count of their sufferings.

BENGAL

I hope to attend the Provincial Conference that is to be held at Faridpur on 2nd May next. I must confess that the impelling force is the temptation of doing khaddar, charkha and untouchables' work. The same temptation will take me to other parts of Bengal. Those, therefore, who want me to visit the other parts will kindly put themselves in correspondence with the organizers of the tour. Deshbandhu Das should naturally be the one to arrange the tour but I have just received a wire from Acharya Ray saying that Deshbandhu is at Patna and that he would like to fix up his khadi centres for visiting. I, therefore, hope that those interested in my tour will place themselves in communication with Dr. P. C. Ray.

MILL SLIVERS

I understand that in several places mill slivers are still used for spinning. I need hardly point out that yarn spun from mill slivers is not hand-spun yarn. Mill slivers are themselves almost like very thick yarn and their use defeats the purpose for which hand-spinning is intended namely, re-introduction of hand-spinning in seven hundred thousand villages of India. It is impossible and useless to send mill slivers to these villages. To cart slivers from Bombay to a Punjab village would be a remedy worse than the disease. Carding is not a defunct occupation. It is possible to get professional carders almost anywhere. Moreover, carding is an employment which pays in cities as well as villages. Therefore, it is an occupation which young men may learn even as a trade. In any event, no Congress office worth the name should be without facilities for carding. A good carder is as much a necessity in a Congress office as an honest clerk and book-keeper.

KHADDAR IN BENGAL

The following is the translation of Mr. Shankerlal Banker's notes[1] on Khaddar work in Bengal:

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[1] Not reproduced here

248. CONUNDRUMS

A Mussalman lawyer handed me the following questions for answer. I am omitting from two questions argumentative matter:

> How far do you approve of the contention of Muslims like Mr. Jinnah and his school of thought that the Indian National Congress which has a large Hindu majority in it cannot adequately and justly represent and safeguard the interests of the Muslim minority and that, therefore, a separate and communal organization like the Muslim League is absolutely necessary?

I do not agree with the contention imputed to Mr. Jinnah. In my opinion, the Congress has from its birth gone out of its way to solicit Mussalman co-operation, even patronage. The existence of the League must, therefore, be justified on other grounds.

> How far do you give countenance to the contention of eminent Hindus like Lala Lajpat Rai and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and their school of thought that the same Indian National Congress, although it consists of a large Hindu majority, cannot also be taken to represent and safeguard the interests of the Hindu community, and that, therefore, separate and communal organizations like the Hindu Mahasabha and the Sangathan are absoutely necessary and essential to protect Hindu interests?

I do not think that the Congress has failed to represent the Hindu interest in so far as it was consistent with the national interest, i.e., the interests of all communities considered as one nation. The existence, therefore, of the Hindu Mahasabha, too, must be justified on other grounds. It is obvious that the Congress cannot represent mutually antagonistic interests. Its existence presupposes mutuality of interest and effort.

> What is your honest belief and conviction as to the real cause, whether remote or immediate, of the frequent riots and differences between Mussalmans and Hindus in North India and of their absence or infrequency in South India?

I can only guess and my guess is that the two communities quarrel more frequently in the North because they are more equally balanced than in the South. Where riots do take place, they occur because both think communally and because either

fears and distrusts the other, and because neither has the courage nor the foresight to forego the present for the sake of the future, or the communal interests for the sake of the national.

> Do you really hope to solve the problem of Hindu-Muslim unity placing as you do reliance upon the present day orthodox Ulema of the Theological School of Deoband and of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Hind, who condemn in season and out of season as *kafirs*, infidels, apostates, and as deserving of no other punishment than being stoned to death, a considerable section of the Muslim community, popularly known as Qadianies, Mrisais, or better as Ahmediyas, or will you seek assistance for the solution of the mighty problem from the Ahmediya community who seem really to hold the key to the situation, and who have already solved the question of Hindu-Muslim unity by their writings and their conduct?

I must woo the orthodox Ulema as well as the Ahmediya community. It is impossible, even if it were desirable, to disregard the "orthodox Ulema". What one must, however, do is not to truckle to any person or party. Having fixed one's minimum from which one may not recede, one may stoop to conquer the whole world.

> Have you ever inquired as to why, while the Muslim community in India as a whole is so keenly interested in the affairs of Muslim countries abroad, not the least appreciable proportion of it takes any active interest in the internal political life and advancement of the country and especially in the Presidency of Madras?

In so far as the charge is correct, the Mussalmans take less interest because they do not yet regard India as their home of which they must feel proud. Many regard themselves, quite wrongly, I think, as belonging to a race of conquerors. We Hindus are in a measure to blame for this aloofness on the part of the Mussalmans. We have not come to regard them as an integral part of the nation. We have not set out to win their hearts. The causes for this unfortunate state of things are historic and were in their origin inevitable. The blame of the Hindus, therefore, can be felt only now. The consciousness being of recent growth is naturally not universal and the physical fear of the Mussalmans in a vast number of cases makes it constitutionally difficult for the Hindus to adopt the blame and proceed to win the Mussalman heart. But I must own to the reader that I no longer regard myself as an expert on the Hindu-Muslim question. My opinion has, therefore, only an academic value. I still hold

to my own view even though I admit that I have found it difficult to make it acceptable to either party.

> What is your remedy for the unfortunate turn the politics of this country have ever since taken, viz., that while politics and political life in this country have from the beginning attracted successfully only a few of the rich and well-to-do classes, it has become almost an impossible thing for men of the middle and the poor classes to lead anything like an active and successful political life in this country, especially during the last four years?

The politics have taken no unfortunate turn. We are passing through a necessary stage. The immense self-consciousness among the poorer classes has upset old calculations and formulae. We have not yet adjusted ourselves to the new state of things. But I see signs everywhere of settling down to the new order of things. Taking even the Hindu-Muslim disturbances in that light, I do not despair of the future. Order must come out of the present chaos. We would expedite the advent of order by watching, waiting and praying. If we do so, the evil that has come to the surface will disappear much quicker than if, in our haste and impatience, we would disturb the surface and thus send the dirt to the bottom again instead of allowing it to throw itself out.

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249. THE NATIONAL WEEK

The 6th and 13th of April must for ever remain green in Indian memory. 6th April 1919 witnessed an unexpected and huge mass awakening of the nation. On 13th of April the nation was made to offer a sacrifice in which Hindu, Mussalman and Sikh blood mingled at Jallianwala Bagh. They became one in death.

Since then much water has flown under the Sabarmati bridge. The nation has passed through many vicissitudes. Today Hindu-Muslim unity seems to have been but a dream. I observe that both are preparing for a fight. Each claims that it is preparing in self-defence. Each is in a measure right. And if they must fight, let them fight bravely, disdaining the protection of the police or the law-courts. If they will do that, the lesson of 13th April will not have been lost upon them. If we will cease to be slaves, we must cease to rely for protection upon the British bayonet or the slippery ustice of law-courts. Not to rely upon either, at the

crucial moment, is the best training for swaraj. The supersession[1] of Sir Abdur Rahim, the passage of the Supplementary Ordinance[2], the restoration of the salt tax, tell us in plainest language that the British rulers propose to rule in spite of our opposition. In fact, they tell us by their action as clearly as possible, that they can and will rule without our assistance. Shall we not have the negative courage of doing without their assistance? We have seen that we can, when we do not quarrel. It is possible, if we have some courage, to do without that assistance even if we quarrel. It is any day better to stand erect with a broken and bandaged head than to crawl on one's belly in order to be able to save one's head. I can see Hindu-Muslim unity issuing out of our street fights without Government intervention. I should despair of real unity if we would fight under the shadow of the British uniform and perjured evidence before British Courts. We must be men before we would rule ourselves.

But the satyagraha week is pre-eminently one of self-purification and self-introspection. It is my fixed conviction, daily growing on me, that we shall not make this unhappy land happy except by purity of conduct which, spelt otherwise, means truth and non-violence. Such purity can come only by prayer and fasting. Hartal in the present state of things is out of question. I, therefore, suggest to those who believe in prayer and fasting to devote 6th and 13th to that sacred purpose. Khaddar and the wheel are the only universal programme in which young and old, rich and poor, men and women can usefully take part. Those who can spin should spin as much as they can and induce their friends to do likewise. Those who can will hawk khaddar in their places and thus the week can be used as a week of dedication to this most important national work.

Hindus have also the impurity of untouchability to remove. They can fraternize with the untouchables. They can set apart what they can spare for the relief of distress among them and, in a variety of ways, make them feel that they are no longer the despised class among Hindus.

Hindu-Muslim unity, khaddar and removal of untouchability are to me the foundation for swaraj. On that firm foundation it is

[1] The appointment of Sir John Kerr as the acting Governor of Bengal for the period Lord Lytton was to take over as Viceroy during Lord Reading's absence from India. Sir Abdur Rahim, a senior member of the Council, should have been given the Governorship.

[2] The Bengal Ordinance, promulgated to supplement the ordinary criminal law in Bengal for the suppression of revolutionary crime

possible to erect a structure nobler than which the world has not seen. Anything without that foundation will be like a building built on sand.

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250. TWO QUESTIONS

During my travels in the South, I discovered that Congress organizations accepted money in lieu of yarn for membership. I understood that the practice had become almost universal. As a member myself and as editor, I have no hesitation in saying that the practice is illegal. Whether it is so in fact or not only the Working Committee can decide. I have no desire as President to give rulings in such matters. But as a common sense man writing for common sense people, I remind Congressmen that the idea of importing money payment as an alternative was discussed and rejected. The idea of yarn being treated as subscription was that everyone desirous of joining the Congress was to be expected himself to take the trouble of knowing good hand-spun yarn from bad and purchasing it. The Congress ledgers can only contain yarn receipts, not monetary subscriptions. To take money payments, therefore, is to violate the constitution. I would go a step further and say that the spirit of the pact[1] requires the Congress organizations to cater and canvass for only self-spinning members. Those who do not wish to spin themselves may send in their quota of yarn but a Congress organization should put forth its best effort by merely catering for self-spinners to popularize hand-spinning among its members. I, therefore, hold it to be the duty of the Congress organizations to return all monetary payments. It is for private agencies to provide hand-spun yarn to those who wish to buy it. Unless this limitation is observed, we cannot claim to have worked or given a fair trial to the new franchise. Personally, I do not mind even though we may have only a few hundred self-spinning members provided that they do the spinning without any stimulation save what is contained in the pride of belonging to the Congress. I hope, therefore, that those Congress offices that have taken money in lieu of yarn will return the same and advise the subscribers to send in hand-spun yarn if they wish to remain members. If the latter

[1] The Calcutta Pact; *vide* Vol. XXV, pp. 288-9.

feel aggrieved, they have a perfect right to secure a ruling from the Working Committee.

The second question I came to know only on reaching Bombay. I understand that there are gentlemen who persist in attending Congress meetings without being fully clad in khaddar. In my opinion, such persons cannot be considered members and have no right to take part in any Congress meetings so long as they remain clad in anything but hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar. In that state, they can neither vote nor speak.

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251. SOME ARGUMENTS CONSIDERED

My article[1] on birth-control has, as was to be expected, given rise to energetic correspondence in favour of artificial methods. I select three typical letters. There is a fourth letter which is largely theological. I, therefore, omit it. Here is one of the three letters:

> I have read your article on "Birth-control" with great interest. The subject is, at present, exercising the minds of many educated men. Last year, we had long and heated debates. They proved at least this much, that young men are acutely interested in this problem, that there is a great deal of prudery and prejudice about it, that in a free and open discussion one's sense of "decency" is rarely shocked. Your article has set me thinking afresh and I appeal to you for some more light to dispel many doubts that arise in my mind.
>
> I agree that "there can be no two opinions about the necessity of birth-control". I further agree that "*brahmacharya* is an infallible sovereign remedy doing good to those who practise it". But I ask whether the problem is not one of "birth-control", than of "self-control". If so, let us see if self-control is a feasible method of birth-control, for the average person.
>
> I believe that this problem can be examined from two different points of view, that of the individual and society. It is the duty of each individual to restrain his carnal passions, and thus evolve his spiritual strength. At all times, there are a few such persons of great moral fibre who set up this noble standard before themselves and will follow no other. But I wonder whether they have any perception of the problem of birth-control which they are intent on solving. A sannyasin is out for salvation, but not for birth-control.

[1] *Vide* "Birth-control", 12-3-1925.

But can this method solve an economic, social and political question of the greatest importance to the vast majority of people within a reasonable period of time? It presses for solution on every thinking and prudent *grihastha* even now. How many children can one feed, clothe, educate and settle in life is a question which brooks no delay. Knowing human nature, as you do, can you reasonably expect large numbers completely abstaining from sexual pleasure after the need for progeny has been satisfied? But, I believe, you would permit a rational and temperate exercise of the sexual instinct, as is recommended by our *smritikaras*[1]. The vast majority may be asked neither to indulge the passion nor to repress it, but only to regulate it. But, even if this were possible, would this method control births? I believe that we shall then have better people but not fewer people. In fact, the problem of population would become more acute, as an efficient population grows faster than an inefficient one. The art of cattle-breeding does not give us few cattle, but more and better cattle.

I agree that "union is meant not for pleasure but for bringing forth progeny". But you must grant that pleasure is the chief, if not the only inducement to it. It is Nature's lure to fulfil its purpose. How many would fulfil it, and do fulfil it, where pleasure is lacking? How many go for pleasure and get progeny, and how many go for progeny and also find pleasure? You say that "Union is a crime when the desire for progeny is absent". It beautifully suits a sannyasin, like you, to say so. For have you not also said that he who owns more than he needs is a "thief" and a "robber", that who loves not others more, loves himself less? But why be so hard on poor and weak mortals? To them, a little pleasure without desire for progeny would soothe and meet natural changes in body and mind. The fear of progeny would, in several cases, agitate nerves, and in some cases, delay marriage. The desire for progeny, in normal cases, would cease after a few years of marriage. Would union after that be a crime? Do you think that a man afraid of committing that "crime" would be morally superior, by sitting tight over the safety-valve of his restless passions? After all, why do you tolerate "thieves", who hold more than they need, but not the "criminals" who unite after the desire for progeny is satisfied? Is it because "thieves" are too numerrous and powerful to reform?

Lastly, you allege that "artificial methods are like putting a premium upon vice. They make men and women reckless". This is a heavy charge, if true. I ask whether "public opinion" has ever been strong enough to restrain sexual excess. I am aware of drunkards being restrained by fear of such opinion. But I am also aware of the

[1] Authors of the *smritis*, law-books regulating social and moral conduct

sayings that "God never sends mouths but he sends meat also", that "Children are born because of God's Will"; of the prejudice that a large progeny is a proof of manliness. I know cases where such opinion gives a license to husbands over wives and considers the exercise of the sex instinct as the main bond of marriage. Besides, is it certain that "adoption of artificial methods must result in imbecility and nervous prostration?" There are methods and methods, and I believe that science has discovered, or will soon discover, innocuous methods. This is not beyond the wit of man.

But it seems that you would not allow their use, in any case, for, "it is wrong and immoral to seek to escape the consequences of one's acts". This is unexceptionable, only you assume that even a moderate exercise of one's appetite, without desire for progeny, is immoral. Moreover I ask, whoever is restrained by the fear of progeny, the consequences of one's acts? In any case, many are impelled to seek the advice of quacks, reckless of their health and happiness. How many abortions have not been caused while "seeking to escape the consequences of one's acts". But, even if "fear" proved an effective restraint, the "moral" results would be poor indeed. Besides, by what system of justice should the sins of parents be visited upon the heads of their progeny and the imprudence of individuals hurt society? It is true that "Nature is relentless, and will have full revenge for any such violation of her laws". But, why assume that the use of artificial methods is *such a violation*. None calls the use of artificial teeth, eyes and limbs, as "unnatural". That alone is unnatural which does not secure our well-being. I do not believe that mankind is by nature vicious, and that the use of these methods will make it worse. There is enough of license even now, not even India excepted. It is as easy to prove that this new power will be properly used as that it may be abused. But let us recognize that man is on the point of winning this tremendous power over Nature, and that we can ignore it only at our cost. Wisdom lies in controlling it, not in shunning it. Some of the noblest workers seek the propagation of these methods, not for indulgence, but to help men to self-control. Let us also not forget that woman and her needs have been ignored too long. She means to have her say in this matter, for she refuses to allow men to treat her body "as tilth for offspring".

The strain of modern civilization is too great to permit her to rear a large family with all the drudgery and worry it means. Dr. Marie Stopes[1] and Miss Ellen Key[2] would ever seek the "nervous prostration"

[1] 1880-1958; author of works on birth-control

[2] 1849-1926; Swedish author who wrote on welfare of women and children

of woman. The methods they suggest can be made effective chiefly by woman, and are more likely to evolve wise motherhood than reckless indulgence. In any case there are circumstances when a lesser evil may avoid a greater. There are dangerous diseases which must be avoided even at the cost of "nervous prostration". There are natural periods of lactation when union is unavoidable but injurious if fruitful. There are women, otherwise healthy, who can bear children only at a serious risk to their lives.

I neither wish nor expect you to turn into a propagandist of birth-control. You are at your best in keeping the light of truth and chastity burning in its purity and holding it before mortals who seek it. But a prudent parent will seek that light more than an imprudent one. Who realizes the need of birth-control may easily evolve self-control. The present license, thoughtlessness and ignorance are so great that even you cry, as if in a wilderness. There is great need for more enlightened discussion than your apologetic and "reluctant" article permits. If you cannot join in it, you must at least recognize it, and, if need be, guide it betimes, for there are breakers ahead; and it will serve no purpose to blink our eyes at the danger, and "hesitate on approaching this subject.

Let me clear the ground by saying that I have not written for sannyasins or as a sannyasin. I do not claim to be one in the accepted sense of the term. My observations are based upon unbroken personal practice with a slight aberration for a period of twenty-five years and that of those who have joined me in the experiment for a long enough period to warrant certain conclusions. In the experiment, both young and old men and women are included. I claim a certain degree of scientific accuracy for the experiment. It has undoubtedly a strictly moral basis but it originated in the desire for birth-control, My own case was peculiarly for that purpose. Tremendous moral consequences developed as an afterthought though in a perfectly natural sequence. I venture to claim that by judicious treatment it is possible to observe self-control without much difficulty. Indeed it is a claim put forth not merely by me but German and other Nature-cure practitioners. The latter teach that water treatment or earth compresses and a non-heating and chiefly fruitarian diet soothes the nervous system and brings animal passions under easy subjection whilst it, at the same time, invigorates the system. The same result is claimed by *rajayogis*[1] for scientifically regulated *pranayam*[2]

[1] Those who practise yoga as a means of liberation
[2] Regulation of breathing, the fourth stage of yoga

without reference to the higher practices. Neither the Western nor the ancient Indian treatment is intended for the sannyasin but essentially for the householder. If it is contended that birth-control is necessary for the nation because of over-population, I dispute the proposition. It has never been proved. In my opinion, by a proper land system, better agriculture and a supplementary industry, this country is capable of supporting twice as many people as there are in it today. But I have joined hands with the advocates of birth-control in India from the stand-point of the present political condition of the country.

I do suggest that men must cease to indulge their animal passions after the need for progeny has ceased. The remedy of self-control can be made popular and effective. It has never had a trial with the educated class. That class has not yet, thanks to the joint family system, felt the pressure. Those that have, have not given a thought to the moral issues involved in the question. Save for stray lectures on *brahmacharya*, no systematic propaganda has been carried for advocating self-control for the definite purpose of limiting progeny. On the contrary, the superstition of larger family being an auspicious thing and therefore desirable still persists. Religious teachers do not generally teach that restriction of progeny in given circumstances is as much a religious obligation as procreation may be under certain other circumstances.

I am afraid that advocates of birth-control take it for granted that indulgence in animal passion is a necessity of life and in itself a desirable thing. The solicitude shown for the fair sex is most pathetic. In my opinion, it is insult to the fair sex to put up her case in support of birth-control by artificial methods. As it is, man has sufficiently degraded her for his lust, and artificial methods, no matter how well meaning the advocates may be, will still further degrade her. I know that there are modern women who advocate these methods. But I have little doubt that the vast majority of women will reject them as inconsistent with their dignity. If man means well by her, let him exercise control over himself. It is not she who tempts. In reality, man being the aggressor, is the real culprit and the tempter.

I urge the advocates of artificial methods to consider the consequences. Any large use of the methods is likely to result in the dissolution of the marriage bond and in free love. If a man may indulge in animal passion for the sake of it, what is he to do whilst he is, say, away from his home for any length of time, or when he is engaged as a soldier in a protracted war, or when he is widowed, or when his wife is too ill to permit him the

indulgence without injury to her health notwithstanding the use of artificial methods?

But says another correspondent:

With respect to your article on birth-control in a recent issue, may I respectfully point out that you start by begging the whole question when you assert that artificial methods are injurious. In the Contraceptive Section of the last International Birth-control Conference (London, 1922), attended by members of the medical profession only, the following resolution was passed with 3 dissentients out of 164 present:

"That this meeting of the Medical members of the Fifth International Birth-control Conference wishes to point out that birth-control by hygienic contraceptive devices is absolutely distinct from abortion in its physiological, legal and moral aspects. It further records its opinion that *there is no evidence that the best contraceptive methods are injurious to health or conducive to sterility.*"

Now it seems to me that the opinion of such a large body of medical men and women including some of the most eminent names in the profession can hardly be set aside with a stroke of the pen. You say: "Adoption of artificial methods must lead to imbecility and nervous prostration." Why "must"? I venture to submit that modern scientific methods do not lead to anything of the kind, though the use of harmful methods through ignorance may. This is only one more argument why proper methods should be taught to all who are likely to need them, i.e., to all adults capable of reproduction. You blame these methods for being artificial, and still want medical men to find out "means of self-control". I do not quite understand what you mean, but as you refer to medical men, would not any "means of self-control" devised by them be equally artificial? You say: "Union is meant not for pleasure, but for bringing forth progeny." Meant by whom? By God? In that case, what did he create the sexual instinct for? You further say: "Nature is relentless and will have full revenge for any such violation of her laws." But Nature, at any rate, is not a person as God is supposed to be, and does not issue orders to anybody. It is not possible to violate Nature's laws. The consequences of actions are inevitable in Nature. Good and bad are words that we apply to them. The people who use artificial methods do take the consequences of their acts like those who don't. Your argument, therefore, does not mean anything unless you can prove that artificial methods are injurious. I assert, from observation and experiment, that they are not, provided proper methods are used. Actions must be judged moral or immoral according to their results and not by *a priori* assumptions as to their morality.

The method you propose was also advised by Malthus, but is absolutely impracticable except for a few selected individuals like you. What

is the use of advocating methods which cannot be practised? The benefits of *brahmacharya* have been greatly exaggerated. Modern medical authorities (I mean those who have no religious prejudices) think that it is positively harmful beyond the age of 22 or so. It is religious prejudice which makes you think that sexual union is a sin except for procreation. As nobody can guarantee the result beforehand, you condemn everybody either to complete abstinence or to take the chance of sinning. Physiology does not teach this and it is now too late in the day to ask people to ignore science in favour of dogma.

This writer has taken up an uncompromising attitude. I hope I have given enough illustrations to show that self-restraint and not indulgence must be regarded as the law of life, if we are to accept and retain the sanctity of the marriage tie. I have not begged the question, for I do contend that artificial methods, however proper they may be, are harmful. They are harmful not perhaps in themselves but because they increase the appetite which grows with every feed. The mind that is so tuned as to regard indulgence not only lawful but even desirable will simply feed itself on the indulgence and will at last become so weak as to lose all strength of will. I do maintain that every act of indulgence means loss of precious vitality so needful to keep a man or woman strong in body, mind and soul. Though I have now mentioned the soul, I have purposely eliminated it from the discussion which is intended merely to combat the arguments advanced by my correspondents who seem to disregard its existence. The tuition that is needed for much-married and enervated India is not that of indulgence with artificial means but complete restraint, if only for the sake of regaining lost vitality. Let the immoral medicines whose advertisements disfigure our Press be a warning to the advocates of birth-control. It is not prudery or false modesty which restraints me from discussing the subject. The restraining force is the certain knowledge that the devitalized and enervated youth of the country fall an easy prey to the specious arguments advanced in favour of indulgence.

It is perhaps now hardly necessary for me to combat the medical certificate produced by the second correspondent. It is wholly irrelevant to my case. I neither affirm nor deny that proper artificial methods injure the organs or produce sterility. No array, however brilliant, of medical men can disprove the ruin which I have witnessed of hundreds of youths who have indulged their passions even though it may be with their own wives.

The analogy drawn by the first writer from false teeth seems to me to be inapplicable. False teeth are indeed artificial and

unnatural but they may serve a necessary purpose. Whereas artificial methods are like antidotes taken by a man who wants to eat not for satisfying hunger but for pleasing the palate. Eating for the sake of pleasure is a sin like animal indulgence for the sake of it.

The last letter is interesting for the information it gives:

> The question is now vexing the governments of the world. I refer to your article on "Birth-control". You doubtless know the antipathy of the American Government towards its propagation. You have no doubt also heard about the free sanction given to it by an Eastern Power—I mean the Empire of Japan. The one rules out birth-control altogether—whether as a result of artificial means or natural ones—for reasons best known to everyone. The other sponsors it for reasons also universally known. In my opinion, there is nothing to admire in the action of the first. Is there much, however, to despise in the step of the second? Don't you think the Japanese Government should be given credit at least for facing facts? They must stop procreation; they must also take human nature at its *present worth*. Is not birth-control, as at present understood in the West, the only way out for them? You will say an emphatic "No". But may I ask, if the course you suggest is practicable? *It may be very ideal, but is it practical*? Can humanity be expected to forgo sexual pleasure to any very appreciable degree? It may be easy to find a glorious few who practise self-control or *brahmacharya*. Can this method, however, be depended upon for any mass movement in this direction? And nothing less than a mass movement is necessary in India to meet the situation.

I must confess my ignorance of the facts about America and Japan. Why Japan is advocating birth-control I do not know. If the writer's facts are correct and if birth-control by artificial methods is at all general in Japan, I make bold to say that this fine nation is rushing headlong to its moral ruin.

I may be wholly wrong. My conclusions may be based on false data. But the advocates of artificial methods have need to be patient. They have no data at all except the modern examples. Surely, it is too early to predict anything with any degree of certainty of a system of control which on the face of it, seems to be repugnant to the moral sense of mankind. It is easy enough to trifle with youthful nature. It will be difficult to undo the evil effects of such trifling.

Young India, 2-4-1925

252. *DIFFICULTIES IN DHOLKA TALUK*

A correspondent writes from Dholka:[1]

If what the correspondent says is true, there are three ways of ending the hardships, and they can be adopted simultaneously. We should explain things and educate those who submit to injustice through ignorance or fear, approach the constables and explain to them their duty and lodge complaints with the officials of the department concerned. Those who submit to hardships cannot be called non-co-operators. They can always petition. There is also the fourth way, going to the court. Kind-hearted lawyers can offer their services free to the people. The last course can be adopted only if the grievance is not redressed by the Government.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 2-4-1925

253. *SPEECH AT MADHADA*

April 2, 1925

I have an unyielding faith in devotion to duty. A fighter knows no fatigue. He wishes to die with his boots on and is confident that, if he cannot win while living, victory will be his after he is dead. Even if you lose your life as a result of your *tapascharya* and the entire Ashram is ruined, you should still believe that the principle of faith in oneself taught by Gandhi is true, and that you will win your goal in the next birth, if not in this.

It often happens that, when we feel ourselves thoroughly beaten and the whole world seems against us, money starts suddenly pouring in from unexpected, unknown quarters; I can cite many instances of such bitter-sweet experiences from my own life. When I fixed one year as the time-limit within which we would have swaraj, God humbled me. He asked me who I was to fix a time-limit. I had no doubt fixed this limit subject to certain conditions being fulfilled, but even so I should have properly

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had described the harassment of the villagers by the officials and constables in charge of a customs post in the taluk.

measured the strength of the country before doing that. I alone am to blame for misjudging that strength. However, I have far more faith and confidence today than what I had in 1920-21, and they are a source of peace and happiness to me. Those who would share my peace and happiness should cultivate the same faith that I have. You described me as a prophet of non-violence, but my friend Shastri and the Government regard me as a prophet of violence. Non-violence is my creed, but what is the meaning of this non-violence if people kill, or abuse others, all in my name? I have been observing that the response to everything I say or do seems to distort it out of recognition, so that I ask myself what must be the quality of the non-violence which I profess to practise. In spite of such difficulties, I am clinging like a fanatic to the principle of non-violence. I go on working without being influenced by what other people think or say, and that enables me to do my work without any fear of losing my sanity or self-control.[1]

Udyog Ashram is a fine name indeed; in industry everything is included. Where the trinity of knowledge, service and action is the aim, two different names like Udyog Ashram and Seva Ashram connote an error in our thinking. We should aim at a happy synthesis of the three ways, and tell the aspirant not to lose faith in God even for a second, not to play with Him. We should ask him not to think that the people of India are hypocrites. They are not. In fact, they are the 33 crores of deities in the Hindu pantheon, if only we can be one with them, otherwise we may even think them to be devils. Parvati had to perform *tapascharya* for thousands of years to get the great Siva as her consort. On the other hand, the age in which we live is the age of strife. If you think that you can achieve a happy synthesis of knowledge, service and action in a short time, you are sadly mistaken. Shankaracharya, describing the patience a seeker after *moksha* must have, says that it is more than the patience of a man who would empty the ocean with the help of a straw. Here Pandit Lalan and Shivjibhai want money. They should show more patience even than the seeker after *moksha*. If they desire that money should pour in, I would tell them that money is but a trifle. Goodwill is a noble quality of the soul and is more difficult to cultivate in others. When Shivjibhai and Lalan feel that people are not coming forward with offers of money, they must attribute the fact to their lack of strength of purpose and the imperfection of their spiritual realization. Instead of believing that they have

[1] In what follows, Gandhiji refers to several names of the Ashram.

had self-realization, they should think that they have had an illusion of it. If, having observed a little *brahmacharya*, we start boasting, or, having kept somewhat the vow of non-possession, we start lecturing others, what an attempt it would be to impose on the world! Personally, I feel every day that the definition of *brahmacharya* and the field of its practice are much wider than I had thought, and I am not today such a *brahmachari* as to be able to give a perfect definition of *brahmacharya*. The same is true about the definition of truth. I have not yet become such a devoted follower of truth in my life that I can give a perfect definition of it. Non-violence, too, is equally difficult to define. The author of the holy books who discovered this principle could not find a positive word for it, for he said that there was no limit to a virtue. He, therefore, employed the word ahimsa. His plight was similar to that of the seers who ended up with *neti, neti*[1]. Anybody who dedicates himself to a high aim must understand this first.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 12-4-1925

254. SPEECH AT DHASA

April 2, 1925

The Government has deposed the Durbar Saheb[2] because he served his people; but has he lost his exalted position? He lost the rule of Dhasa and gained that of Borsad. The whole world knows him today. He now rules over the hearts of the people of Borsad. Many people have made heavy sacrifices in this great *yajna* for the freedom of India, but he is the only one among the rulers to have done so. Has he really lost the rule of Dhasa? He will do that only when you, the people, throw him out and say that you have no place for him in your hearts. I am afraid, however, that you have actually deposed him, since you have broken the pledges you made to him. The *Antyajas* have not kept their pledge not to weave foreign yarn, not to touch liquor or eat meat. Let the whole world perish, but a pledge must not be broken. And especially if you do not keep a pledge made to your ruler, you would deserve to have your heads chopped off. But we have

[1] Literally, "not this, not this", indicating the ineffable nature of Reality

[2] Durbar Gopaldas, ruler of a small State in Saurashtra; he had joined the Congress.

no Harischandras[1] now who would sell themselves for the sake of their word, nor any ruler who deserves the right to demand a man's head. If the *Antyajas* broke their pledge, so did you. Would you behave as you do if you really wanted your Durbar Saheb back? How many women wear khadi? How many have taken to spinning? The Government may have deprived the Durbar Saheb of his authority; if, however, you in Dhasa pay the revenue to the Government but respect the Durbar Saheb's orders in other matters, will he have been deposed? When Rama went to live in the forest, his subjects insisted on going with him and suffered voluntarily for his sake. A brother like Bharata performed *tapascharya* at Nandi Gram, installed Ramchandra's wooden sandals on the throne and meditated on them. What did you do? You can get back your Durbar if you obey orders issued from Borsad. I shall tell you. Listen how you can do this.

Let every man and woman wear khadi and ply the spinning-wheel, let the *Antyajas* weave only with hand-spun yarn and wear khadi themselves. The *mahajan* should not ill-treat the *Antyajas*; it should attend to their difficulties about water, etc., and refuse to regard them as untouchables. Do this, and then ask me what the position of the Durbar is. Whether he returns or not, I will then come to you, giving up the fight for the country's freedom, and join you in your *tapascharya*.

What are you waiting for? Has the love for the Durbar Saheb which you once professed before me evaporated? You complain that the *Kathis* let loose their cattle into your fields. Did the Durbar forbid you to defend yourselves and your fields? Even the British Government gives you the right to drive out poachers and beat off cattle from your fields. Why have you become so helpless? Why did you break all your promises?

But let bygones be bygones. Are you ready to make a fresh start? You have seen the Durbar in a turban and rich clothes. But now he wears a shirt of coarse khadi. He wears no cap, and has only a coarse loin cloth wrapped round his waist. What do you intend to do? Have you given up your turbans? Will you lose your manhood by doing so? What have you done so far that I should regard you fit to call the Durbar back? Do not mind, however; take a pledge today for one year. Let the *Antyajas* give up meat and drink and stop weaving foreign yarn. You should give up foreign cloth. Everybody should spin and wear hand-woven cloth. If you do not wish to burn your foreign

[1] King of Ayodhya who suffered the severest ordeals for the sake of truth

clothes, put them aside for the time being. If, after living for a year in this manner, you find that I do not keep my pledge, you may cut off my head and start wearing your old, foreign clothes again. Each and every home must have a spinning-wheel. If you do not get enough cloth, wear only a cod-piece or wrap a little bit of khadi round your waist. Welcome the *Antyajas* among you, and let them also use the water which God has provided for you. If you do not, you may be sure you will see the end of the world. Do not for a moment talk of asking the *Antyajas* to drink water from those ponds from which you yourselves would never draw your drinking water.

Do these simple things which are in your own interest, and if then you do not get the Durbar back, write to me. Though I am a non-co-operator, I will still request the Government to restore him to you. If I fail, I will join you in your *tapascharya*. May God give you the strength to keep your pledges, and likewise give me the strength to keep mine. I have poured out my heart to you and expressed my hopes. You may now act as you think best.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 19-4-1925

255. SPEECH AT BAGASARA

April 2, 1925

I have a special liking for Bagasara. I did not know the difference between a loom and a spinning-wheel in 1908, though I had written about the latter in *Hind Swaraj*[1] then. When I returned to India, Bagasara was the first place to help me in reviving weaving. I was in search of someone from whom I could secure a specimen loom, and I wrote to Shri Ranchhoddas Patwari.[2] He informed me that I could get one from Durbar Shri Vajsurwala. This gentleman was the first to give me a loom; afterwards the Nawab Saheb of Palanpur gave me another and also sent a worker. I had succeeded in securing a loom, but I found it hard to start weaving. Then, too, the Bagasara weavers came to my help. This town is a centre of weaving and, if the weavers and

[1] *Vide* Vol. X, pp. 6-68.
[2] *Vide* Vol. XIII, pp. 101 & 103.

traders here take sufficient interest, they can supply enough khadi for the whole of Kathiawar.[1]

I cannot find words strong enough to condemn the practice of accepting bride-money. A daughter is like a meek cow; anyone who, instead of giving her in marriage as a sacred gift, treats her as a means of making money and sells her, commits a sin far more heinous than killing a cow. When I think about the probable origin of communities like *Chandalas*[2] and *Antyajas*, I feel that society must have cut off relations with persons who accepted bride-money and treated such persons as outside the pale of the recognized castes. If any people deserve to be so treated, I believe, it is those who accept bride-money, though, of course, in no circumstances can it be right to treat a person and his descendants as perpetual untouchables.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 19-4-1925

256. SPEECH IN REPLY TO WELCOME ADDRESS, PALITANA

April 3, 1925

HON'BLE THAKORE SAHEB, BROTHERS AND SISTERS,

I thank you all for presenting me with an address. Receiving it from Thakore Saheb's hand, I feel honoured all the more. All kinds of praises have been showered on me in the address. These are nothing new to me now. Wherever I go, I find the same words arranged in different ways. When I listen to them all, I am so touched that I feel like praying to God to grant me that whatever is said in these addresses may come true.

Let me tell you something else which has been left out in the address. Only one side has been referred to in the address but it must not be forgotten that there is another side to the medal. I find those who praise me and take part in these functions are indifferent to the ideas they praise me for. It is my fate that wherever I go, I should criticize. But that is unavoidable. I do not ask blind faith from the public; neither do I seek polite phrases from rajas and maharajas. Those may be pleasant to hear. But I wish to become a link between the ruler

[1] Gandhiji then explained the scheme of the Kathiawar Political Conference for raising a fund of Rs. 20,000 and continued as follows.

[2] Outcastes regarded as untouchable

and the subjects. I shall deem my duty done if I can bring them together and explain the views of one to the other. I have maintained the same relationship with the British. It is my intention to bring the British and the Indians together. I shall not be able to achieve this task if I don't receive the full co-operation of the subjects. I do not say "of the ruler" because I am myself a subject and wish to remain so. I am therefore better able to understand the distress of the people and their words and I can expect greater co-operation from them. Let me ask of them therefore that what they praise [in me] they should praise themselves.

I have often said that the maxim, "As the king, so the subjects" is true and so too its converse, "As the subjects, so the king". If the subjects are truthful then there is no likelihood of disrespect [for the king]. There would be nothing wrong with the king. If the subjects are indolent and unruly, what is there that the best of rulers can do? Think over it. Our *rishis* have not conceived of a better king than Janaka. Rama was an avatar and accepted as God. So we cannot regard him as an ideal [for a king]. But Kalidas[1] has attributed all the [kingly] qualities to Janaka. Suppose the people of Janaka's times were not attuned to his ways, what could the king have done? If today the people do not respond, what can the ruler do? I have seen in Travancore that if the subjects do their duties, the Maharani will manage to do hers. But if the subjects remain recalcitrant, the Maharani cannot do anything, however much she wants. If today I alone were to declare my rejection of untouchability, it will be of no avail. I am telling you all this in the presence of Thakore Saheb with a somewhat selfish motive. Today you have praised me, but if you do nothing tomorrow and I reprimand you for it, you would be nasty to me. On subjects such as these, I expect more from the people than from the ruler. What work can the ruler get out of idlers and drunkards? I had a talk with Thakore Saheb about drinking. He told me that there were no liquor shops here, not even a tea shop; but there are many who would take smuggled drinks. Where things have come to such a pass, what can the ruler do? Can a ruler cure one of one's bad habits? All that can be expected of him is that he should not be a party to the corrupting of his people.

That is why unless the people of Kathiawar are steadfast in their conduct, nothing can be achieved. Without that the pros-

[1] Apparently a slip for Valmiki

perity we aspire for, we are not likely to attain. I entertain especial hopes of the people because I see promise of prosperity in Kathiawar. If we can get [help] from the people we shall get it from the ruler. And that is the *bhiksha*[1] I beg for. There was a time when I asked for money. And people were not slow to respond. Women took off their jewellery and gave it. People have given away their diamonds and pearls. But today I ask for something else and that is a change in conduct. I ask that the defects in our character should be removed. But I get no response. Wealth you can give me. I thank you for presenting me a purse. It will have its uses. But that will not satisfy me.

You must have compassion. Palitana is sacred and the greatest among the places of Jain pilgrimage. But its people have not yet imparted to others the lesson which they should. Seeing the women did not make me happy; on the contrary I felt unhappy. These women do not understand even the common ethics of compassion. If the poor people of Kathiawar have to leave the State for earning a paltry two or four annas a day to whom is it a disgrace? I regret to say that it is to both the ruler and the subjects. If the matter were in my hands, I would permit no one to leave and would even pass a law to that effect. For the sake of adventure, let them go from one end of the globe to the other. Today there is not a corner of the earth without a Kathiawari. They include castemen, *Vaghelas* and Rajputs. Tod[2] has stated that there were many Thermopylaes[3] in Rajputana. How many Thermopylaes do we see here in Kathiawar? Let the people seek adventure to become millionaires. Let them seek adventure for the sake of education. But I feel sorry when Kathiawaris say that they go elsewhere because they have nothing to eat at home. There is a shortage of water in Kathiawar. So it is in South Africa, but there the adventurous Boers lifted water from deep wells. I was a member of such a farm[4] where a drop of water could not be had. We tried hard and succeeded in watering 1100 acres of land by digging a well in a small spring. We have to dig deep down before we strike water. The deeper we go the more water we get. Minerals as well as springs of water occur inside the earth. But these are conditions of extreme scarcity.

[1] Alms

[2] James Tod (1782-1835); historian; Political Agent to the Western Rajput States; author of *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*

[3] A reference to the historic battle of Thermopylae (480 B.C.)

[4] The Phœnix Settlement near Durban started by Gandhiji in 1904; *vide An Autobiography*, Pt. IV, Ch. XIX.

It would be exile for the poor of Kathiwar if its industry of a hundred years is not revived. But to keep poverty at bay, people must needs wear khadi. There is no salvation unless we wear khadi, coarse or fine. I urge the ruler and the subjects to practise this simple religion. There is nothing to lose by doing so; no one can stop us from practising it and there is no need for machinery. It does not demand self-sacrifice or penance. It only needs a change of heart. Merely by wearing a particular kind of cloth, one fulfils a great dharma. I feel upset that though I receive all these addresses, I cannot persuade the ruler or the subjects to do this little thing. I believe in heeding the inner voice and therefore think that there is something wanting in my *tapascharya*. But I do not give up hope. If my *sadhana* is true, a time will come when the whole of India will put on khadi.

I repeat my words to Lord Reading and Lord Willingdon. My soul will not abide in peace so long as the king, the queen, the porter, the officer, the people and the *Bhangi* do not all become khadi-minded. For there is no other means for eradication of poverty than this. There is no other way but that of the spinning-wheel. Hence I call it a *Kamadhenu* and value it higher than the sword. Rama did not give up the bow and arrow, but he gathered firewood for Vishvamitra. He did nothing which the people had not done. As long as the king does not win the hearts of his subjects, he cannot understand them well. The king must do that which is vital for the people's livelihood. That is why training in the Navy is obligatory for the British kings. Their King George drank black coffee and ate cheese. The king takes on the people's habits. Because the subjects are virtuous, the king enjoys happiness. If they overcome their bad habits he will be happy for ever. We can't say when they would do that. But when they do that, their virtues will be there for the whole world to see. I wish that our rulers and the people may emulate the virtues and adventures of those people. I wish that we may overcome our shortcomings. During the War the barristers and the professors carried thread and needle in their hands and with these they sewed gowns. I was drafted for ambulance work. Those who could not go to the front in Belgium and France did have this work at any rate. They made the work so easy that even an untrained person could sew as many gowns as the expert. I can cite many such instances. If all that you have said in the address is true, you should imbibe all these virtues.

Why have you become so lax? Why is machine yarn used in the *Antyaja* colony? Can't you produce that much yarn in

Palitana? I do not want you to encourage Ahmedabad [mills]. I want you to make the finest khadi.

I visited the *Antyaja* school and was unhappy. There was not a single non-*Antyaja* teacher that could be found for the school. Whose fault is it? The Thakore's? You look upon yourselves as pious. But is not there even one among you who is ready to do this work? It is my hope that Brahmins and Banias will come forward offering to teach. In that school one does not get even drinking-water. This is also your job, Thakore Saheb! Why should your subjects not get water? Those people dig in the river bed and try hard to extract water. There are wells even in dharmsalas. But *Antyajas* cannot draw water from there! What kind of dharma is it that even the travellers can get water but not the *Antyajas*? Who bothers about them? Who among you claims to be compassionate? How can you call yourselves Hindus?

There is no place in our religion for the kind of untouchability being practised these days. After reflection on the Shastras, purifying myself, and much introspection, I have come to the conclusion that the way we practise Hinduism will prove to be its destruction. That is why I ask you to beware. It is the duty of the ruler and the subjects to protect Hinduism. The only way to reform Hinduism is to serve the *Antyajas*. We cannot wash off our sins without self-purification. I request you therefore to befriend the *Antyajas*. Just as you have come here tidied, provide them with the means with which to clean themselves. If in spite of this they do not clean themselves, tell them that they are unclean and therefore untouchable. But I know that there are thousands of *Antyajas* who are no less clean than I am. They have every capacity and no shortcomings. Whatever shortcoming we see in them, is due to us. That is why I ask you to take the matter into your own hands and apply for service in the school. One person had asked for a salary of Rs. 150 but how can we afford such large amounts? Demand what you need for your livelihood and start an *Antyaja* school from tomorrow. No man may dump his dirt into his neighbourhood.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 318-24

257. DISCUSSION WITH A JAIN "MUNI" AT PALITANA[1]

April 3, 1925

GANDHIJI: Does this imply that Lalan can ply the spinning-wheel only if he makes no such claim [to practise ahimsa to the utmost limit]? I have not understood in what way it involves the renunciation of the dharma of ahimsa. It is understandable that unlike a householder, a sadhu should do nothing which would promote his self-interest; but surely he may ply the spinning-wheel for the welfare of others. Let us take one instance. A sadhu may not go out at night. Supposing, however, a neighbour's house is on fire, if a sadhu stays at home and does not help his neighbour with water, it would, I think, amount to violence rather than non-violence. Similarly, if during a famine, those who are stricken by it are given food only after they do some set work, it becomes their dharma to do what is assigned to them. If people are dying of thirst, but no one is ready to dig with spade and hoe, a sadhu has no choice but to set an example by taking up these tools. It is not enough to ask others to dig. Even when you do not wish to drink a drop of water, nevertheless, if you get ready with a spade and a hoe and are content only after you have quenched the thirst of others, that can be called ahimsa. There is no harm if you drink water even if you do not wish to do so after having quenched the thirst of others. In this way, a sadhu may do many things for the welfare of others; it becomes his duty to do so. Similarly, when there is widespread starvation in India today, when the spinning-wheel enables the poor to be fed, when it has become one's dharma to make every idle person take to spinning, how can a sadhu be permitted not to spin and advise others to do so? Why should people do something that sadhus do not regard as worthwhile? It becomes the dharma of the sadhu, therefore, to sit down with a spinning-wheel and silently work at it. He should not answer if anyone comes to him and seeks his advice; even if he is asked a second time, he should keep

[1] Gandhiji visited Munishri Kapurvijay at Palitana. Lalan who accompanied Gandhiji, asked the Munishri whether there was any objection to a *muni* (saint) spinning on a wheel. Munishri replied in the affirmative and added that a *muni* claiming to practise supreme ahimsa could not ply a wheel. Thereupon Gandhiji initiated the conversation. The conversation has been extracted from Mahadev Desai's article "Third Time in Kathiawar".

silent; finally, he should break his silence and say that besides doing this he has no other advice to give. Hence this alone is the dharma of the sadhu who is attentive and vigilant. There is a risk of the sadhu turning selfish in this work; in that case, his downfall is but proper. Instead of remaining idle and being a burden to society, he will become industrious and work for his livelihood.

I accept the state of extreme non-violence. What, however, is the nature of that state? As a matter of fact, today, sadhus eat and drink like householders, they wear the same kind of clothes, they live in the *apasaras* that have been built for them by the people; they must therefore take part in public life. They must participate in that work which is the greatest public service today.

MUNISHRI: It would then be an *apaddharma*[1].

GANDHIJI: No, it is not that, but the dharma of the age. Today, the dharma of our times is to spin and so long as the sadhu is dependent on society for his daily needs, he must spread the dharma of the age by practising it. Today, you eat the rice grown and cooked by the people, and wear the clothes produced by them. It is a different matter, however, if he eats left-overs lying around, does not care to cover himself, and lives in some unapproachable and unseen cave away from society. He is then free not to observe the dharma of the age. Otherwise, I would say the very same thing today even to the sannyasi who lives and moves in society. In Travancore, I have told the sannyasi who is the guru of the *Thiyas*[2] not to accept anyone as a disciple unless he comes to him dressed in khadi, so that it would also put an end to overcrowding there. I would ask this of you also. It is possible that this would encourage hypocrisy; but then were there no hypocrites surrounding Shri Rajchandra? It is not we who are harmed by such hypocrisy but the hypocrites themselves.

MUNISHRI: I have not gone into this matter in such detail. I shall discuss it with you after doing so.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 12-4-1925

[1] Action allowable only during extreme distress or calamity
[2] A community in Malabar traditionally regarded as untouchable

258. A SPINNER'S DIFFICULTIES

A lover of the spinning-wheel from Bombay describes what he had to go through before he secured one. It was with great difficulty that he found a shop selling spinning-wheels. He got one after waiting for two and a half hours. He paid Rs. 4 as. 8 for it and, on returning home, found that the spindle was bent. The spinning-wheel moved by fits and starts and even now it does not work well. Now, this gentleman asks me what he should do. Another gentleman writes to say that he spins well when he stays at one place; however, he cannot do so while touring around, as he is unable to get a spinning-wheel everywhere.

The difficulties of both are real and yet not so. Anyone who has fully mastered the technique of spinning will not experience the first difficulty because he would be able to repair a bad spinning-wheel. He could carry his spindle with him. However, just as each spinner should become fully proficient in spinning, each Congress Committee should maintain spinning-wheels and other accessories in good working condition. If this is not done, those who have enthusiasm but no knowledge would be left in the lurch. The Congress officials could also remove the difficulties of the second gentleman. There should be an arrangement in the Congress Committee for those who wish to spin. Even in the smaller Congress offices a few spinning-wheels should be in operation.

However, the *takli*[1] can solve all these problems. Anyone who can spin on the *takli* can travel with his spinning-wheel in his pocket. During my tour of Travancore, I found the *takli* invaluable. I carry it with me in a bamboo tube. It costs little, and it is immensely useful. Hence I would advise every spinner to carry, without fail, a *takli* with him. It may produce only twenty-five yards in an hour, but, as it is something that can be used at any time and at any place, there is no end to its usefulness. It is for this reason that it can compete with a spinning-wheel in spite of producing less yarn per hour. For the poor, the *takli* is like a blessed sister.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-4-1925

[1] A spindle consisting of a round disc attached in the centre to a thin rod about seven inches long

259. TWO CONVERSATIONS

A large number of students come and ask me questions on various subjects. Some of them harass me very much, while others go away satisfied after asking me a few questions in a quiet manner. Both these types of conversations took place during the past few days, and as they are interesting I give them below:

FIRST CONVERSATION[1]

During the return journey from Madras, I lay tired and exhausted in the train and was trying to catch up with my writing. The train halted at a station and presently a young man who had just completed studies entered my compartment after asking my permission. He asked me:

"Are you returning from Vykom?"

"Yes."

"What happened there?"

I did not like this question and asked him in return, "Where do you come from?"

"I belong to Malabar."

He carried two newspapers. I asked, "Do you read newspapers?"

"How can I? I have to travel so much, you see."

"I see you are carrying a copy of *The Hindu*. You can get all the news you want of Vykom from it."

"But I want to hear it from you."

"If everyone, like you, starts asking me the news and I have to answer, I would have no time for any other work. Have you thought of that?"

"But you can tell me."

"Do you read *Young India*?"

"No, I do not get time for reading. I read *The Times* though, for I can get it."

"Then I cannot spare any time for you. You do not read *The Hindu*, nor *Young India*. What can I tell you, then, in ten minutes during a chance meeting like this? Please excuse me."

"So you will not tell me"?

"Please excuse me. You do not even wear khadi and are needlessly harassing me."

[1] This took place at Guntakal on March 25, while Gandhiji was on his way to Bombay.

"But it is your duty to tell me what happened."

"And it is your duty to wear khadi."

"I have no money."

"You are wearing gold buttons. You give them to me and I shall provide you khadi."

"I have a fancy for these buttons and that is why I wear them. Why should I give them to you?"

"Then please excuse me now."

"So you will not tell me anything because I do not wear khadi?"

"Take it that way if you like. But please excuse me."

"Why don't you say that you will not tell me what happened?"

"All right, if you would have it so."

"I shall make this behaviour of yours public."

"You may, with pleasure. But you should now allow me to do my work."

"I have been doing what I can. I had even collected something like a hundred rupees for the Malabar Fund."

"And yet you will not wear khadi which is woven by poor people."

"When people die of starvation, you think of asking people to spin—do I not know that?"

"Let us not discuss that subject."

"Should I go away then?"

"Please do, now."

I am afraid, I could not make this friend see that he should not waste my time, which is people's time, by asking me about things he can easily learn from newspapers. After he had left, I felt that had I, instead of being serious with him, talked to him good-humouredly, I could have converted him, though I should certainly have had to spend more time on him. I fear that my seriousness and the consequent stiffness lost me a public worker. Truly, how difficult is the path of non-violence! One has always to be vigilant, however busy one may be, and must constantly try to enter the heart of the person with whom one is talking and that of the bystanders. Those who follow the path of non-violence can have no time of their own and cannot think of their convenience. Whether or not they are in a position to attend to a thing or can spare the necessary time, they are servants who have sold themselves to the world for its service. I saved my time, looked to my convenience, tried to become a teacher and, seeking to instruct, lost the pupil. Tulsidas and other saints have rightly said that a person without discrimination is a brute.

SECOND CONVERSATION

The one whom I wanted to teach had proved to be my teacher. I had learnt the lesson and did not wish to lose another worker. I was, therefore, vigilant. This student was from the Punjab. The Punjabis whom I have met were all of them courteous people. This student, too, was extremely polite and so I had no occasion to exercise vigilance and restrain myself.

"I have been trying for five years," he said, "to be able to see you. My ambition has been fulfilled today."

"You are welcome. Do you have anything in particular to ask me?"

"With your permission, Sir, I should like to ask you a question or two in regard to my studies."

"You are welcome to do that."

"Do you believe that I can make a living from the spinning-wheel?"

"No. I have never recommended spinning as a means of livelihood for people like you. You can take it up only as a form of *yajna*.

"What should I do then?"

"If I can persuade you, I would ask you to take up carding and weaving as a means of livelihood. These crafts can be easily learnt."

"Will they help me to maintain my family?"

"Yes, if all your family members help you in the work."

"That is impossible for a family like mine. As you see, I wear khadi. I also spin. I believe in spinning. But how can I create the same faith in my family members? And even if I succeed in doing so, they will not agree to do this work."

"I can well understand your difficulty, but a good many of us will have to change our way of living; otherwise there is nothing but despair in store for the seven lakh villages of our country."

"I understand the idea, but I do not have the strength to follow it in practice today. I want your blessings so that I may have it, but till then what should I do?"

"That is for you and your elders to think out. I have placed before you what I believe to be the ideal."

"Should I learn some craft like pottery?"

"It is certainly useful. You can make a living from it and, if you have some capital to invest and start a factory, you will also help a few others to earn their livelihood. But you must

admit that in that case you will have to exploit the labourers, for you will be keeping more for yourself and pay them less."

"That is true. But, being used to city life, I think I cannot do anything else, for the present at any rate. I shall, however, never forget what you have told me. I hope I have your blessings?"

"Every student has my blessings in all good undertakings."

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-4-1925

260. IS THIS NON-CO-OPERATION?

A gentleman writes to say:[1]

If any teachers in a national school or leaders have acted as alleged in this letter, their conduct was certainly disgraceful and should make one sad. If a teacher who has joined the non-co-operation movement applies for a Government job and, failing to get it, applies to a national institution and joins it, he certainly cannot be counted a non-co-operator. If the national school to which he applied knew of his having sought a Government job, it would not appoint him, and if it was forced by circumstances to appoint him he would not thereby be qualified to be called a non-co-operator. The leaders who preserved their own valuable foreign garments and got others' burnt were worse than these teachers. They deceived their countrymen and still maintained their leadership. I do not know if the teachers or the leaders acted in the manner alleged. The correspondent has even sent their names to me, but I have not thought it proper to reveal them. It is also possible that the correspondent, though he has given the names, has himself been misled and that his information may be incorrect. I have often received such allegations, and they were found to be without any foundation.

But suppose that what the correspondent writes is true; even so, he has no ground for the conclusions he has drawn. If two teachers or a couple of leaders have betrayed the movement, that does not mean that everyone is like them. Hundreds of non-co-operators have remained staunch in the face of overwhelming temptations. Hundreds of *snatakas* have refused to appear at

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had cited several instances to show that people had not been sincere in their support of the non-co-operation movement and suggested to Gandhiji that he should adopt the programme of the Swaraj Party.

Government recognized examinations; they suffer hardships, but do not give up courage. I have, therefore, no reason to feel repentant.

It is thoughtless to say that all khadi-wearers are hypocrites and cheats. I should certainly like to see people in khadi caps wherever I go,[1] but I do not see anything of the sort. I have no reason whatever to believe that the few people who wear khadi caps are cheats. They are perfect strangers to me. Some of them I would probably see only once in my life. What do such persons expect to gain by wearing khadi only to please me? Even if they wear khadi with that motive, I would still not call them hypocrites.

It is not true that non-co-operation was planned without feeling the pulse of the people. I would not have got the idea of khadi had I not felt their pulse. If any movement is being carried on steadily, it is that of khadi and the spinning-wheel. I do not know of any other national activity in which so many voluntary workers are engaged and which is a source of untainted income to so many people. This programme is making some progress, no matter how small. Even if the poor have not taken it up actively, they have welcomed it. They know instinctively that the programme is rightly conceived, adds to the country's wealth and is of universal value.

The correspondent says that the spinning programme will not succeed and I should, therefore, give it up and also withdraw the spinning qualification for the franchise. I cannot give it up for reasons explained above. I have no authority to omit the spinning qualification for voting. The Congress can do so at the end of the year if it wishes to. But even if it does, the correspondent will always find me a worshipper of khadi and the spinning-wheel.

The correspondent further says that swaraj cannot be won by khadi alone. I have never said that it can; but what I have said, and repeat again, is that it cannot be won without khadi. It is not true that we lost our independence although we used to wear khadi then. We gave up khadi and lost our independence. If we introduce khadi again, we shall get back our independence also. Besides, when we lost our freedom we did not know that khadi has the virtue of preserving it. Now we know that. If we do not know that we can walk long distances if our lungs are strong, we may possibly lose that strength by neglecting to take

[1] The correspondent had argued that Gandhiji was taken in by the sight of people in khadi caps wherever he went.

care of them so that they become diseased. If even after knowing it, we do not regain our strength by improving the lungs, we would be reckoned fools. The same thing can be said about khadi.

The correspondent wants everyone to be a Swarajist. I can only say that that is not the view of the Congress. At any rate, the khadi movement does not prevent a single person from joining the Swaraj Party. A sincere Swarajist can be a devotee of khadi. There are Swarajists who are such devotees. The compact endorsed by the Congress[1] assumes that both the parties have faith in khadi, and has explained what that faith is. It is, therefore, permissible to a person, while spinning and persuading others to spin or weaving khadi and persuading others to do so, to join the Swaraj Party and invite others to join it.

I do not at all feel sorry that only a few members are left in the Congress. If it has only ten thousand members who are sincere lovers of khadi, they will be able to serve the Congress and the country more effectively than hundreds of thousands of members, who are such only in name and who do nothing but pay their four-anna subscription to the Congress. Indeed a large number of such members may do more harm than good.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 5-4-1925

261. INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

General Smuts deserves credit for supporting the cause of the Indians in South Africa. But this by itself will not remove their hardships. Their plight is becoming more and more pitiable. European traders are out to destroy completely the Indians' business, the very means of their existence. They are, therefore, now ready openly to attack the trade-interests of Indians settled in the Transvaal. India is not in a position to help them. Government has given up all pretence of decency. It sets no store by public opinion in this country. No matter what the result of voting in the Legislative Assembly is, the Government goes its own way. Public opinion in India is of course in favour of their countrymen in South Africa. Whatever is possible will certainly be done here. But I feel it my duty to warn the Indians

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXV, pp. 491-3.

living in South Africa or other foreign countries that they must in the last resort rely on their own strength. The saying, "One cannot go to heaven except by giving up one's own life" fully applies to their situation.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-4-1925

262. *MY NOTES*

Unintended Injustice

Shri Amritlal Thakkar had dedicated himself to the service of the poor and is, therefore, always thinking about them; sometimes it is the *Bhils*[1] and sometimes it is the *Bhangis*, or it may be a small store selling pure khadi. True to this self-imposed mission, or, if you like, this vocation of his, he writes to me as follows:[2]

If I have, intentionally or otherwise, used *Navajivan* to give publicity to the other two stores, I now give like publicity, with full intention, to this khadi store so dear to Amritlal, and wish that its monthly sales may go up from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 30,000. This is not an impossible hope. The author of the *Mahabharata* asks: "Between human effort and Fate, which is more potent?" and, not being able to come to any definite conclusion, he represents sometimes the former and sometimes the latter as the more potent. If the proprietor of this khadi store has faith and courage and is sincere, his efforts will draw Fate to his side, and his store will prosper and help the other two also to prosper; for it can be asserted in regard to the khadi movement that if one store prospers other stores in the same town will also prosper. I have seen this with my own eyes at Tirupur. It is a small town, but has five or six stores. When people liked khadi, all of them flourished. However, when people became indifferent to khadi, all of them lost custom.

Cash in Lieu of Yarn

It has been noticed that some Committees accept cash in lieu of yarn when enrolling members of the Congress. According to me, this is against rules. It was suggested that those who

[1] An aboriginal tribe

[2] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had drawn Gandhiji's attention to a small khadi store run by a private gentleman at some loss to himself, and said that Gandhiji had done it an injustice by not mentioning it in his article "Is Bombay Asleep?", 23-3-1925.

might not spin or get the required yarn spun by others, could pay cash, but the suggestion was rejected on the ground that if a person wishing to become a member did not even take the trouble to obtain yarn from somebody else, the spinning qualification for the franchise would be rendered pointless. If, nevertheless, members are enrolled on payment of cash, it is surprising indeed. The truth is that if the spinning qualification for the franchise is to succeed, Congress Committees should exert themselves to see that all those enrolled as members are persons who themselves spin. A person offering purchased yarn may certainly be enrolled, but the Congress should try to encourage only those who spin with their own hands, if it wishes to see the new plan succeed. Whether or not this is done, it is a violation of the Congress constitution to enrol members by accepting cash.

Those Who Do Not Wear Khadi

To have the right of voting in the Congress, a member has to wear khadi when doing Congress work and on similar occasions. In spite of this, it is found in places that members do not wear khadi. In my view, this is also against the rules of the Congress. Personally, I do not understand how we can win swaraj if we do not obey rules framed by ourselves. Somebody may argue that it is only proper to disregard the rules of the Congress which one does not approve of. But this is not right, for, if everybody disregarded rules which he did not like, there would be no rule which would be obeyed by all, and as a result the constitution, i.e., the very system, would break down. Before a rule is introduced, one may oppose it as much as one likes, but to violate it after it has been accepted would be to invite chaos. Let no one say that my argument would also rule out civil disobedience. The argument is not correct. Civil disobedience is offered only when not to do so would be immoral. In this case, there is no question of immorality. To wear khadi is not immoral. I have yet to hear anyone argue that it is immoral to wear khadi.

The question, therefore, arises what should be done when a member not wearing khadi comes to attend a Committee meeting. The President can politely ask him to leave; if the member disregards the request, he can be stopped from making a speech. In any case, his vote should not be counted. Do I express these views as the President of the Congress, or are they just my private views? I have no desire whatsoever to express a view as the President. If an occasion arises requiring a ruling on this matter, I do not wish to give any. I will ask the Working Committee

to decide. I myself suggested the change in the franchise and drafted the rule; I, therefore, do not think it would be proper for me as President to give any ruling. The right thing would be for the Working Committee to give a ruling. But I hope that nobody will ask for an authoritative ruling from the Working Committee on a simple point like this.

NEXT WEEK

This issue will be in the readers' hands before April 6. I have already explained what we should do during the National Week.[1] I, however, wish to lay stress again on khadi and spinning. This is one programme which the people can carry out successfully, if they wish to. So far we have not been able to complete a single national programme of permanent value. Khadi is one such programme, which we can successfully carry out if only we decide to do so. There can be no religious objection to it. I have never heard of one. It is not difficult to carry out either, for we have the necessary resources and means. Only the will is lacking. Even more than the will, we lack efficiency, do not work hard enough. Has anything been ever achieved in this world, can anything be achieved, without hard work? If we do not understand this, what great task can we ever accomplish? I have often heard people saying that they would work if others did. But how are we concerned with what others do? It will be enough if we do our duty. I wish that every reader will understand this and spend all his energy in khadi work during the forthcoming Week.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-4-1925

263. *MY NOTES*

HARDSHIPS OF WEARING KHADI

I am giving below a few excerpts, in his own language, from a letter which a cobbler friend writes from Karachi:[2]

Such difficulties will always arise. Every reformer has to face hardships. I compliment this cobbler family.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 5-4-1925 (Supplement)

[1] *Vide* pp. 426-8.

[2] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had recounted the difficulties he had had to face on having adopted khadi and insisting on wearing khadi at the time of marriage.

264. SPEECH AT LATHI

April 5, 1925

Why has the Lathi of 'Kalapi' come to be known as Ramjibhai's[1] Lathi? Is there anything so special about him?

Only this, that at a time when everyone else refused to weave hand-spun yarn, he and Gangabehn gave a lead and set out to do so. What did he lose by doing so? Today, he is well known throughout Gujarat. He went as far as even Kashi Vishwanath and taught weaving; he was able to come to Poona too to see me. He gained this reputation only because of his singleness of purpose in weaving hand-spun yarn. Gangabai surpasses even her husband at weaving. I worship her although she is an untouchable because that aged lady is holy and abides by her vow. I shall not encourage you in your demand for a temple[2] and I shall also ask the manager not to go out of his way to do so. If I ask for a lakh of rupees for you today, I can get it, but why should I ask for this sum? If you wish to build a temple, you can do so on your own. I shall look after your physical well-being; you should, on your own, make arrangements to satisfy the hunger of your souls. If I have a temple built for you now, you would dance in it after getting drunk—I found this to be a fact in Dhoraji. If you, therefore, feel a real need for a temple, contribute towards it by the sweat of your brow, ask Ramjibhai to contribute funds and when a good amount has been collected, request the manager to contribute an equal sum. If you do this much, I shall add a sum equal to the above two sums. Do so if you really need such a temple. Have only a true *Vaishnava* as the priest. The temple should have three trustees—the manager of the temple or Thakore Saheb when he ascends the throne, myself and a person nominated by you; and the temple will continue to function only so long as it is run well, otherwise, it will be taken away from you.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 12-4-1925

[1] A weaver; *vide An Autobiography*, Pt. V, Ch. XL.

[2] The teachers at the *Antyaja* school, while submitting their report before Gandhiji, had suggested the building of a temple for *Antyajas*.

265. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Monday [April 6, 1925][1]

BHAISHRI, GHANSHYAMDASJI,

I have your letter. I certainly was not joking when I said that you surpassed me. I see nothing wrong in it. Surely, one should endeavour to surpass one's elders and friends in moral strength. It is my duty to add to the moral heritage bequeathed to me by my elders. I always pray to God that He may grant my friends more strength than I possess, which only means that He may save them from my shortcomings. I do wish you surpass me in moral strength. Therein lies the fulfilment of my association with you. Similarly you should wish greater strength to me. This is one thing in which competition will not breed jealousy.

I hinted at re-marriage only to safeguard you against any eventuality.

Yours,
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Hindi original: C. W. 6110. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

266. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, MANGROL

April 8, 1925

There is a limit to a man's patience and I, too, have reached mine. When I see *Antyaja* girls being asked to sing from that distance, I can keep quiet no longer. You must have noticed that every five minutes my eyes turned to the *Antyajas* standing there in that corner outside the cordon. I could not bear that they should be given seats there. If *Antyaja* girls are to sing from there, the presentation of the address on behalf of the Congress committee would be a mere farce, it would be just for show. I have said again and again that I am a *Dhed*, an *Antyaja*, a *Bhangi*. I take pride in describing myself thus. It gives me joy to do so. When asked about my profession in the past, I described myself as a farmer and weaver,[2] but, in my reply to the address

[1] *Vide* Letter to the addressee dated March 30, 1925.
[2] *Vide* Vol. XXIII, p. 85.

of the Madras Municipal Corporation,[1] I went a step further and described myself as a *Bhangi*. How, then, can you keep at a distance those among whom I count myself and at the same time expect to keep me among you? While singing my praises, you throw verses from the *Gita* in my face; how then do you imagine that I would keep these people at a distance? If you are honest in the praise you have bestowed on me, in attributing the virtues you have done to me, we should ask those girls to take their seats right in our midst. You are irritated at this and ask in anger why these people should have come to the meeting at all to disturb the peaceful and happy atmosphere here. If their coming here has pained you, as seeing them standing at a distance has pained me, do tell me so. We have, all these days, been merely passing resolutions. On your welcome arches I read slogans about abolition of untouchability. Either these are merely for show, or what we see here betrays your weakness. It is my duty on this occasion to help you overcome that weakness. I ask you, therefore, either to take back the address you have given me, or let me go and sit in the midst of the *Dheds*. If you sincerely wish that our *Antyaja* sisters and brothers should sit among us, tell me so. My religion enjoins non-violence, as does yours. In fact, every religion teaches non-violence; the difference is only in the extent to which one is required to practise it in action. I do not, therefore, wish to hurt you at all. If you let the *Dheds* come over here merely out of your regard for me, my non-violence will have been compromised. Permit them to come only if you feel it your duty to do so, convinced that what I have told you a thousand times about following dharma is right and should be accepted. It will not hurt me even if you raise your hands against admitting them. I shall only ask myself, with a sigh, how and when Hindus will see light. And, therefore, let everyone raise his hand for whichever side he likes, without fear and without false regard for anyone.

I am placed in a very unhappy position. As the number of those who want the *Antyajas* to be kept at a distance is very small, it is my humble request to them that they should retire from the meeting. If they do not appreciate the spirit of my request and take offence, it is better that I myself should go and sit among the *Antyajas*.

We cannot follow here the ordinary law of meetings. In this difficult situation, it is better that you let me go and sit there.

[1] On March 7, 1925. (pp. 240-2)

You should not feel hurt. You had not told the people in advance that *Antyajas* would be admitted. In fact, you had let all of them sit apart and, if I had not protested, you would have let them remain where they were. It seems to me, therefore, that by applying the ordinary law of meetings on this occasion we shall be hurting those others. My sitting there will give me no pain, and it will save you embarrassment, will make things easier for you.[1]

The problem of *Antyajas* has unexpectedly assumed a serious shape here. That people left the meeting was, I think, an auspicious beginning. I compliment the friends who left quietly, as also those who have stayed behind intending to take a bath after returning home. It would have been very good if you had let me go. But what has happened is not bad either. The meeting has acted within its rights, and I would have violated my non-violence if I had forced you to act in a particular way. Besides, it is not right for me to put all the pressure on those who agree with me. I, therefore, understood the keen desire of my supporters and kept to my seat, content with the arrangement which followed.

I shall now address a few words to those who oppose me. Though this matter is being discussed for the last several years, what a pity it is that you still do not wake up to the truth! You would have had no objection if a *Dhed* had quietly come and taken his seat in your midst. The objection came only because the matter was mentioned.[2] If any volunteer did this, he acted well, but he has been guilty of deception if he admitted an *Antyaja* making it appear that he was not an *Antyaja*. If he did, he has deceived me and deceived those who believe that they earn religious merit through the practice of untouchability. We cannot force anyone to follow dharma. There can be no compulsion in any matter concerning dharma; by using compulsion, we really violate dharma. If any volunteer has acted in this manner, he should atone for his conduct, should apologize for it.

The person who interrupted me earlier did not understand what I was trying to say. You do not mind contact with *Antyajas* in trains, public offices, mills and other public places where they mix with us. In mills, actually, we employ them to

[1] The person in the audience who had protested against the admission of *Antyajas* was finally persuaded to leave, after which Gandhiji proceeded with his speech.

[2] Someone in the audience protested at this point, saying that in fact volunteers had admitted *Antyajas*.

work and naturally, therefore, we don't object to contact with them. It is neither human nor clever nor wise to forget this and to think that those who consider untouchability sinful and abominable are foolish men, thus closing one's eyes to the truth. I advise you to have some practical wisdom. *Vaishnavas* claim that they are full of love. What love did they show for *Antyajas* in this meeting? I met a few *Antyajas* on my way to Bagasara. They told me that they were not allowed to draw water from the common well, and that they were obliged to get it from open ponds. Is this compassion? Is it compassion to force these people to get their drinking water from what serves animals, and from which we never drink? It is, on the contrary, sheer cruelty, it is the very opposite of dharma, it is sin, it is the demoniac way. It is no part of Vaishnavism, nor of the teaching of the *Bhagavata*. If it is proved that any of the scriptures teach this thing, I shall have nothing to do with that Vaishnavism or that Hinduism. I heard the same tale in Hadala. The *Antyaja* who is endowed with the same five sense-organs that we possess, who is, like us, capable of good or evil, this *Antyaja* to be forbidden to drink the water given to us by God! The reason, that he eats meat! If he does, he does it publicly. What do we do to those who eat it secretly? We accept bride-money which is as heinous as killing a cow, and then we observe the practice of untouchability as dharma. Those who follow this dharma have no compassion, they are actuated by hypocrisy and cruelty in every fibre of their being. The only rule of cleanliness enjoined in the *Manusmriti*[1] is that one should avoid touching a woman while she is in her period and with a *chandal* while he is engaged in his unclean work. The most that the Shastras enjoin is that after touching a person in whose circle of relatives a death has occurred, or a *chandal* or a woman in her period, one must take a bath. If so, what is the justification for all this oppression? Why special residential localities for *Dheds*? Why the boycott of *Dheds* and *Bhangis* in every matter? We follow these practices and still claim to be descendants of Narasinh Mehta, pretend to perform devotions with the *Navakar mantra*[2]. Your claims will avail you little till your hearts have become compassionate. Even if the whole country said that I was not a true Hindu, I would claim that I was the only true Hindu, and assert that others who held the practice of untouchability to be a part of dharma were false Hindus. Even at the moment of

[1] The code of Manu, an ancient Hindu jurist

[2] A Jain prayer

death, I will keep repeating that this thing is a sin. There can be no *moksha* for me, for I am passionately attached to this cause. But who am I to eradicate this practice? I do indeed want Hinduism to be purged of cruelty, to be free from the practice of untouchability, from immorality and from sin. That is my wish, and I express it on every occasion. When I have the strength to bring this about merely by wishing it, I shall retire to the Himalayas. For the present, however, my life is a life of activity. But in the midst of all this activity I am not restless, I shall sleep in peace. Whether you are *Vaishnavas* or *Shaivas*, let all Hindus understand this: the fate of your religion is hanging in the balance. You do not know that in every part of the world Parsis, Christians and Muslims ask: Which religion is true, which has more of compassion and love in it, which enjoins worship of one God? At a time like this, you should understand that you will not succeed if you try to preserve Hinduism in an unclean box. All your sacred marks on the forehead and your temples will avail you little so long as your hearts are not saturated with love for all human beings, all creatures. This explains why the women did not raise their hands against admitting *Antyajas*, a fact which shows that the virtue of pure womanhood is still alive among us. I have seen all over the country that it is only the women who follow the right path. Why don't you understand, then? Why don't you understand that sixty million people cannot be treated as *Antyajas*? Malaviyaji and the Shankaracharya of Karvir-Peeth also say that this is impossible.[1] That friend believes that what I am saying proceeds from ignorance, and I believe that he is talking in ignorance. Who will judge between us? People will judge only after both of us are dead. I confess that I am an imperfect man. I do not follow my own definition of truth. If I did, would I have to argue with people? If I had perfect non-violence in me, would this friend possibly feel hatred for me? Would he have been angry?[2] I only wished to say, my friend, that my non-violence was imperfect, for you had become angry. If, however, what you say is true and you were not angry, that proves that I do have in some measure the spirit of non-violence in me. I do believe that I have a modicum of ahimsa. What I am saying proceeds from love, it is one hundred per cent gold.[3] No one should lose self-control while speaking

[1] Gandhiji was interrupted at this stage by a member of the audience.

[2] The person in question protested to say that he was not angry and had spoken calmly.

[3] The critic again interrupted Gandhiji.

to him. Those who raised their hands in my favour are under a double obligation to tolerate even this friend. I have said all this to restrain your anger, and also to win over a little to my side those who oppose me. But, how can I expect to succeed in this in one evening? All I shall say is, we shall not secure swaraj till we have made our hearts like the pure ocean.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 19-4-1925

267. NOTES

To Provincial Secretaries

I hope that Provincial Secretaries will continue to send to the General Secretary and to *Young India* office the returns of membership from week to week and with such further details as may throw light on the working of the franchise. It is the easiest thing for Congress organizations to defeat the purpose of the new franchise. But they are expected to put their whole heart into it, to make it work successfully. Nor is mere enlistment the sole or even the chief part of the work. To keep up the membership requires ceaseless watching and continuously improved organization. It is no easy thing for those who have hitherto satisfied their national conscience by simply flinging a few rupees or a few annas into the Congress cash-box to think of the nation day after day and to labour for it even though it be for half an hour per day. Ten thousand such spinners will revolutionize our national life and bring light to the dim eyes of millions of paupers of India. These ten thousand spinners must be voluntary in every sense of the term—not the semi-starved spinners who spin for a living but who would give also perhaps half an hour to the nation free. I want these, too, if they will spin without undue pressure. But the real khaddar atmosphere—the atmosphere of action rather than speech, of self-help rather than helplessness—will be produced only by ten thousand spinners drawn from the middle class men and women who today belong to the Congress and work the organization.

Khaddar in Kathiawar

The Working Committee of the Kathiawar Political Conference has arrived at an important decision regarding khaddar propaganda. It resolved to collect cotton from the various districts of

Kathiawar for distribution among spinners and get it spun. It had already received promises of over 300 maunds from donors. Now it had resolved to collect at least 800 maunds or, which is the same thing, Rs. 19,200 for the work. The idea is to get this cotton spun and woven into khaddar. Kathiawar is a poor peninsula with a very small rainfall. In some places there is a chronic famine condition. Thousands of women would spin for supplementing their slender resources. It has also thousands of weavers among untouchables, who for want of their hereditary occupation are obliged to go to Bombay or elsewhere and work as scavengers in order to keep body and soul together. Khaddar at the present moment is not as cheap as it might be. It has, therefore, been resolved to find out families that would spin for their own clothing if they had a supply of slivers at cheap rates and facilities for getting their yarn woven also at cheap rates. The Parishad has, therefore, in order to encourage such families, undertaken to supply slivers at 6 annas per lb., no family to be supplied with more than 10 lbs. during the year, and to pay half the cost of weaving. The khaddar will cost the consumer a little over a third of the cost or 3½ annas per yard instead of 9 annas which is the usual rate ruling in Kathiawar. Thus he will have 50 p.c. bounty in order to induce him to spin and wear the khaddar woven out of his yarn. To put it another way it is proposed to clothe out of Rs. 19,000 worth of cotton at least 2,750 families consisting of husband, wife and child. The following wages will have been distributed or earned before the cotton becomes khaddar:

Ginning	800 Mds.	Rs. 1,000
Carding	800 Mds.	Rs. 4,000
Spinning	700 Mds.	Rs. 7,000
Weaving	675 Mds.	Rs. 6,750
	Total:	Rs. 18,750

In the process of carding the weight will be reduced from 800 to 700 and in spinning it will be further reduced to 675 mds. In length the khaddar will be 67,500 yards and 30 inches in width. The count will be on an average 8. This is an experiment which is fraught with important economic consequences. The cotton, it will be noted, will be hand-ginned. I hope to summarize the results of the experiment from time to time. I must mention here that it is possible to contemplate an experiment of this nature only because Kathiawar has got three well-managed khaddar centres with trained workers. The money has still to be collected

and it must be inside of two months' time. I hope that every Kathiawari will help either by contributing his labour or funds.

From Upanishads

Borodada[1], who is ever watchful of the happenings in national affairs, sends me the following:

> In corroboration of what you have said in one of your excellent articles about the sinfulness of committing brutal crimes said to be sanctioned by high religious authorities of one's own sect I quote with the greatest pleasure the following injunction of a Guru to his disciple given in the *Taittiriya Upanishad*:
>
> यान्यनवद्यानि कर्माणि । तानि सेवितव्यानि । नो इतराणि ।
> यान्यस्माकं सुचरितानि । तानि त्वयोपास्यानि । नो इतराणि ।
>
> "Those actions which are irreproachable shalt thou practise, and no other. Whatsoever good actions we perform, those shalt thou look up to with reverence as examples to be followed, and no other."

Khadi Worker's Difficulties

Sjt. Adi Narayan Chettiar who is in charge of organizing Congress members in Tamilnad has put a series of questions to which he would like me to reply. His first question is:

> Do you wish to discourage the enlistment of C class members hereafter, or do you advise the stopping of such enlistment altogether?

I have no right to *discourage* the enlistment of C class members, i.e., those who buy yarn. They have as much right under the constitution to be enrolled as class A, i.e., self-spinners. But I will not encourage such enlistment. If I was a canvasser I would put forth my best efforts exclusively to the enlistment of A class, but gladly take in the others when they offer themselves for enlistment.

The second question is:

> There are a large number of women in places like Tirupur, Pudupalaiyam, Tendiruperai, Adarampatnam, Kallakurichi, etc., who spin for their livelihood. Do you think some of these may be enrolled as Congress (A class) members—after explaining to them that by joining the Congress as members they throw their half an hour's labour into the Nation's begging bowl—only labour, for, I propose that the Congress Committees should supply them with the requisite cotton for spinning 2000 yards of yarn per month, *gratis*.

[1] Dwijendranath Tagore, elder brother of Rabindranath Tagore

I would certainly enlist these sisters as members if they understand what the Congress is and if they wear khaddar.

The third question is:

> What is your advice as regards the employment of paid propagandists to stimulate hand-spinning and the enlistment of such spinners as Congress members as per Belgaum resolution?

Paid workers may be certainly engaged wherever funds permit and funds should be obtained by begging cotton.

The fourth is:

> Some want loans—and loans in my experience end in gifts for want of proper accounting and collecting agencies—of charkhas and even cotton as a condition precedent to their commencing to spin. I must say some of them are really poor people. Do you advise compliance with this request? If so, on what terms?

Loans of charkhas, etc., ought to be given wherever necessary and reasonable security should be taken for return of the materials. Charkhas may be sold even on hire-purchase system.

"To be Attained"

A friend writes:

> You have always preached that swaraj must be *attained* and not *obtained.* In this connection I send from Daniel's *Life of Woodrow Wilson,* the following apposite passage, thinking it will interest you.
>
> "In his (Wilson's[1]) mind, the *means* of bringing about democratic Government comes from within not without, *by moral, not by physical, force.*"
>
> "I have not read history" he said, "without observing that the greatest forces in the world, and the only permanent forces are the moral forces."

Young India, 9-4-1925

[1] 1856-1924; President of the U.S.A., 1913-21

268. *COW-PROTECTION*

It will be remembered that at the Cow-Protection Conference held at Belgaum a committee was appointed to frame a constitution for the founding of a permanent All-India Cow-Protection Organization. In consequence of the resolution, the Committee met in January at Delhi and framed a draft constitution in Hindi which will be submitted to a general meeting to be held in due course. The following[1] is the translation:

Young India, 9-4-1925

269. *MY FRIEND, THE REVOLUTIONARY*

The revolutionary whom I endeavoured to answer[2] some time ago, has returned to the charge and challenges me to answer certain questions that arise out of my previous answers to him. I gladly do so. He seems to me to be seeking light, even as I am, and argues fairly and without much passion. So long as he continues to reason calmly, I promise to continue the discussion. His first question is:

> Do you really believe that the revolutionaries of India are less sacrificing, less noble or less lovers of their country than the Swarajists, Moderates and the Nationalists? May I challenge you to keep before the public the names of some Swarajists, Moderates or Nationalists who have embraced the death of a martyr for the sake of the motherland? Can you be bold, nay, arrogant enough to deny it in the face of historical facts that the revolutionaries have sacrificed more for their country than any other party which professes to serve India? You are ready to make compromises with other parties, while you abhor our party and describe the[ir] sentiments as poison. Will you not tremble to use the same word of intolerance for the sentiments of any other party which is decidedly inferior in the eyes of God and men to us? What makes you shrink from calling them misguided patriots or venomous reptiles?

I do not regard the revolutionaries of India to be less sacrificing, less noble or less lovers of their country than the rest. But I respectfully contend that their sacrifice, nobility and love

[1] *Vide* "Draft Constitution of All-India Cow-Protection Sabha", 24-1-1925.
[2] *Vide* "A Revolutionary's Defence", 12-2-1925.

are not only a waste of effort, but being ignorant and misguided, do and have done more harm to the country than any other activity. For, the revolutionaries have retarded the progress of the country. Their reckless disregard of the lives of their opponents has brought on repression that has made those that do not take part in their warfare more cowardly than they were before. Repression does good only to those who are prepared for it. The masses are not prepared for the repression that follows in the trail of revolutionary activities and unwittingly strengthen the hands of the very Government which the revolutionaries are seeking to destroy. It is my certain conviction that had the Chauri Chaura murders not taken place the movement attempted at Bardoli would have resulted in the establishment of swaraj. Is it, therefore, any wonder that, with such opinion I call the revolutionary a misguided and therefore, dangerous patriot? I would call my son a misguided and dangerous nurse who, because of his ignorance and blind love, fought at the cost of his own life the physicians whose system of medicine no doubt did me harm but which I could not escape for want of will or ability. The result would be that I would lose a noble son and bring down upon my head the wrath of the physicians who, suspecting my complicity in the son's activities, might seek to punish me in addition to continuing their harmful course of treatment. If the son had attempted to convince the physicians of their error, or me of my weakness in submitting to the treatment, the physicians might have mended their way, or I might have rejected the treatment, or would, at least, have escaped the wrath of the physicians. I do make certain compromises with the other parties because, though I disagree with them, I do not regard their activities as positively harmful and dangerous as I regard the revolutionaries'. I have never called the revolutionaries "venomous reptiles". But I must refuse to fall into hysterics over their sacrifices, however great they may be, even as I must refuse to give praise to the sacrifice of my misguided son for his sacrifice in the illustration supposed by me. I feel sure that those who through insufficient reasoning or false sentiment, secretly or openly, give praise to the revolutionaries for their sacrifices, do harm to them and the cause they have at heart. The writer has asked me to quote instances of non-revolutionary patriots who gave their lives for the country. Well, two completed cases occur to me as I write these notes. Gokhale and Tilak[1] died for their country. They worked in al-

[1] B. G. Tilak (1856-1920); patriot, politician and scholar

most total disregard of their health and died much earlier than they need have. There is no necessary charm about death on the gallows; often such death is easier than a life of drudgery and toil in malarious tracts. I am quite satisfied that among the Swarajists and others there are men who will any day lay down their lives if they felt convinced that their death would bring deliverance to the country. I suggest to my friend, the revolutionary, that death on the gallows serves the country only when the victim is a "spotless lamb".

> "India's path is not Europe's." Do you really believe it? Do you mean to say that warfare and organization of army was not in existence in India, before she came in contact with Europe? Warfare for fair cause—Is it against the spirit of India? *Vinashaya cha dushkritam*—Is it something imported from Europe? Granted that it is, will you be fanatic enough not to take from Europe what is good? Do you believe that nothing good is possible in Europe? If conspiracy, bloodshed and sacrifice for fair cause are bad for India, will they not be bad as well for Europe?

I do not deny that India had armies, warfare, etc., before she came in contact with Europe. But I do say that it never was the normal course of Indian life. The masses, unlike those of Europe, were untouched by the warlike spirits. I have already said in these pages that I ascribe to the *Gita*, from which the writer has quoted the celebrated verse, a totally different meaning from that ordinarily given. I do not regard it as a description of, or an exhortation to, physical warfare. And, in any case, according to the verse quoted it is God the All Knowing Who descends to the earth to punish the wicked. I must be pardoned if I refuse to regard every revolutionary as an all-knowing God or an avatar. I do not condemn everything European. But I condemn, for all climes and for all times, secret murders and unfair methods even for a fair cause.

> "India is not Calcutta and Bombay." May I most respectfully put it before your Mahatmaship that the revolutionaries know the geography of India enough to be able to know this geographical fact easily. We hold this fact as much as we hold that a few spinners do not form the Indian nation. We are entering villages and have been successful everywhere. Can you not believe that they, the sons of Shivaji, Pratap and Ranjit, can appreciate our sentiments with more readiness and depth than anything else? Don't you think that armed and conspired resistance against something satanic and ignoble is infinitely more befitting for any nation, especially Indian, than the prevalence of effortlessness

and philosophical cowardice? I mean the cowardice which is pervading the length and breadth of India owing to the preaching of your theory of non-violence or more correctly the wrong interpretation and misuse of it. Non-violence is not the theory of the weak and helpless, it is the theory of the strong. We want to produce such men in India, who will not shrink from death—whenever it may come and in whatever form—will do the good and die. This is the spirit with which we are entering the villages. We are not entering the villages to extort votes for councils and district boards, but our object is to secure co-martyrs for the country who will die and a stone will not tell where his poor corpse lies. Do you believe like Mazzini that ideas ripen quickly, when nourished by the blood of martyrs?

It is not enough to know the geographical difference between Calcutta and the villages outside the railways. If the revolutionaries knew the organic difference between these, they would, like me, become spinners. I own that the few spinners we have, do not make India. But I claim that it is possible to make all India spin as it did before, and so far as sympathy is concerned, millions are even now in sympathy with the movement, but they never will be with the revolutionary. I dispute the claim that the revolutionaries are succeeding with the villagers. But if they are, I am sorry. I shall spare no pains to frustrate their effort. Armed conspiracies against something satanic is like matching satans against Satan. But since one Satan is one too many for me, I would not multiply him. Whether my activity is effortlessness or all efforts, remains perhaps to be seen. Meanwhile, if it has resulted in making two yards of yarn spun where only one was spinning, it is so much to the good. Cowardice, whether philosophical or otherwise, I abhor. And if I could be persuaded that revolutionary activity has dispelled cowardice, it will go a long way to soften my abhorrence of the method, however much I may still oppose it on principle. But he who runs may see that owing to the non-violent movement, the villagers have assumed a boldness to which only a few years ago they were strangers. I admit that non-violence is a weapon essentially of the strong. I also admit that often cowardice is mistaken for non-violence.

My friend begs the question when he says a revolutionary is one who "does the good and dies". That is precisely what I question. In my opinion, he does the evil and dies. I do not regard killing or assassination or terrorism as good in any circumstances whatsoever. I do believe that ideas ripen quickly when nourished by the blood of martyrs. But a man who dies slowly of jungle fever in service bleeds as certainly as the one on the gal-

lows. And if the one who dies on the gallows is not innocent of another's blood, he never had ideas that deserved to ripen.

> One of your objections against the revolutionaries is that their movement is not mass movemant, consequently the mass at large will be very little benefited by the revolution, for which we are preparing. That is indirectly saying that we shall be most benefitted by it. Is it really what you mean to say? Do you believe that those persons who are ever ready to die for their country—those mad lovers of their country—I mean the revolutionaries of India in whom the spirit of *nishkama karma*[1] reigns, will betray their motherland and secure privileges for a life—this trifling life? It is true that we will not drag the mass just now in the field of action, because we know that it is weak, but when the preparation is complete, we shall call them in the open field. We profess to understand the present Indian psychology full well, because we daily get the chance of weighing our brethren along with ourselves. We know that the mass of India is after all Indian, it is not weak by itself but there is want of efficient leaders; so when we have begot the number of leaders required by constant propaganda and preaching, and the arms, we shall not shrink from calling, and if necessary, dragging the mass in the open field to prove that they are the descendants of Shivaji, Ranjit, Pratap and Govind Singh. Besides we have been constantly preaching that the mass is not for the revolution but the revolution is for the mass. Is it sufficient to remove your prejudice in this connection?

I neither say nor imply that the revolutionary benefits if the masses do not. On the contrary, and as a rule, the revolutionary never benefits in the ordinary sense of the word. If the revolutionaries succeed in attracting, not "dragging", the masses to them, they will find that the murderous campaign is totally unnecessary. It sounds very pleasant and exciting to talk of "the descendants of Shivaji, Ranjit, Pratap and Govind Singh". But is it true? Are we all descendants of these heroes in the sense in which the writer understands it? We are their countrymen, but their descendants are the military classes. We may, in future, be able to obliterate caste, but today it persists and therefore the claim put up by the writer cannot in my opinion be sustained.

> Last of all, I shall ask you to answer these questions: Was Guru Govind Singh a misguided patriot because he believed in warfare for noble cause? What will you like to say about Washington, Garibaldi and Lenin? What do you think of Kamal Pasha and De Valera? Would you like to call Shivaji and Pratap, well-meaning and sacrificing

[1] Effort without desire, the principal teaching of the *Gita*

physicians who prescribed arsenic when they should have given fresh grape-juice? Will you like to call Krishna Europeanized because he believed also in the *vinasha* of *dushkritas*?

This is a hard or rather awkward question. But I dare not shirk it. In the first instance Guru Govind Singh and the others whose names are mentioned did not believe in secret murder. In the second, these patriots knew their work and their men, whereas the modern Indian revolutionary does not know his work. He has not the men, he has not the atmosphere, that the patriots mentioned had. Though my views are derived from my theory of life I have not put them before the nation on that ground. I have based my opposition to the revolutionaries on the sole ground of expedience. Therefore, to compare their activities with those of Guru Govind Singh or Washington or Garibaldi or Lenin would be most misleading and dangerous. But by test of the theory of non-violence, I do not hesitate to say that it is highly likely that had I lived as their contemporary and in the respective countries, I would have called everyone of them a misguided patriot, even though a successful and brave warrior. As it is, I must not judge them. I disbelieve history so far as details of acts of heroes are concerned. I accept broad facts of history and draw my own lessons for my conduct. I do not want to repeat it in so far as the broad facts contradict the highest laws of life. But I positively refuse to judge men from the scanty material furnished to us by history. *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*[1] Kamal Pasha and De Valera too I cannot judge. But for me, as a believer in non-violence out and out they cannot be my guides in life in so far as their faith in war is concerned. I believe in Krishna perhaps more than the writer. But my Krishna is the Lord of the universe, the creator, preserver and destroyer of us all. He may destroy because He creates. But I must not be drawn into a philosophical or religious argument with my friends. I have not the qualifications for teaching my philosophy of life. I have barely qualifications for practising the philosophy I believe. I am but a poor struggling soul yearning to be wholly good—wholly truthful and wholly non-violent in thought, word and deed, but ever failing to reach the ideal which I know to be true. I admit, and assure my revolutionary friends, it is a painful climb but the pain of it is a positive pleasure for me. Each step upward makes me feel stronger and fit for the next. But all that pain and the pleasure are for me. The revolutionaries are at liberty to reject the whole

[1] Of the dead say nothing but good.

of my philosophy. To them I merely present my own experiences as a co-worker in the same cause even as I have successfully presented them to the Ali Brothers and many other friends. They can and do applaud whole-heartedly the action of Mustafa Kamal Pasha and possibly De Valera and Lenin. But they realize with me that India is not like Turkey or Ireland or Russia and that revolutionary activity is suicidal at this stage of the country's life at any rate, if not for all time in a country so vast, so hopelessly divided and with the masses so deeply sunk in pauperism and so fearfully terror-struck.

Young India, 9-4-1925

270. MESSAGE TO "DESH"[1]

[Before *April 12, 1925*]

The work which I am doing at present is better than satyagraha. It is difficult to make people realize that, but it is true. Satyagraha means general civil disobedience but we must develop the capacity to disobey laws. At present, I am trying to acquire that fitness. Spinning and wearing khaddar is a vital part of this effort. Without them, it is impossible for us to launch civil disobedience. My request to all leaders in the country is to spin at least for half an hour a day and to become habitual wearers of khaddar.

[From Bengali]
Ananda Bazar Patrika, 12-4-1925

271. TO KATHIAWARIS

The last meeting of the Working Committee of the Kathiawar Political Conference held in Amreli was attended by 26 members. It was held in two sessions and lasted six hours. Some very impore tant decisions were taken at this meeting. They are as follows:

1. Any individual or family that agrees to wear cloth woven exclusively from self-spun yarn should be supplied slivers subject to a maximum of ten pounds, at half the cost price and arrangements should be made to get their yarn woven at half the normal rate.

[1] A nationalist weekly, now defunct, founded in Patna by Rajendra Prasad

The following members of the Committee undertake to enlist volunteers who will always wear self-spun khadi:

Shri Shivji Devshibhai	500	Volunteers
Shri Ramjibhai Hansraj	1000	,,
Shri Chhotalal Tribhovandas	100	,,
Shri Devchand Uttamchand Parekh	1000	,,
Shri Jagjivandas Naranji Mehta	100	,,
Shri Manilal Paramananddas	50	,,

Gandhiji should collect 800 maunds of cotton needed for this purpose or should collect Rs. 19,200 as its cost. The amount already collected, less Rs. 1,000 spent out of it already, should be deducted from this sum.

Further, every person who gets cotton from the General Secretaries should maintain in the required manner an account of the quantity received by him and should send the account to the Secretaries.

Resolution relating to enrolment:

2. The following members of the Conference undertake to enrol additional members as noted against their names:

Shri Chhotalal Tribhovandas: 251 members (with provision for 3 pounds of cotton in lieu of one member)

Shri Shivjibhai Devshibhai: 151 members (no provision about cotton)

Shri Ramjibhai Hansraj: 101 members (no provision about cotton)

Shri Jagjivandas Naranji: 151 members (no provision about cotton)

Shri Shivanand: 101 members (with provision for cotton in lieu)

Persons doing enrolment work will have the right to get the yarn spun by them woven into khadi and to sell that khadi at cost price; if they cannot arrange to get the yarn woven, they may send it to the Central office.

3. If the Khadi Centres at Wadhwan, Madhada and Amreli cannot sell the khadi produced by them, the Conference should buy it up at cost price (which should not include more than 12½ per cent as overhead expenses).

These resolutions provide three ways of popularizing khadi and spinning. The first and the best is to induce some families to wear cloth made from yarn spun by themselves. The second is to have a class of members who would spin for half an hour daily and would always wear khadi, buying their requirements from the market. The third way is to produce khadi for those who wear it though they themselves do not spin.

Though the last two steps in this are important, they call for no discussion. But the first one does. It is the best way for popularizing khadi. It involves a little expenditure, however. I say "a little" advisedly, because compared to the consequent benefit the money required is very little. The plan is to get 2750 families to spin and wear khadi, at an expenditure of Rs. 19,200. One family is estimated as consisting of a couple and a child, making a total of 8250 persons. The benefit is evident enough. Yarn produced from ten pounds of slivers will give sufficient cloth for a family to last for a year. After this, no further effort will be required to create love of khadi in those who have worn it for a year.

But the special advantage of this method is that people will be employed in work at home. A family which is so employed will be free from the fear of famine. Hence Shri Devchandbhai has described this plan as an insurance against famine, and he is right.

The plan is estimated to cost Rs. 19,200. That is 800 maunds of cotton will be distributed among workers, who will get khadi made from it and also find buyers for it. The expenses to be incurred over the necessary arrangements for this will be met from the sum mentioned. They have been estimated for one year. The plan will benefit ginners, carders and spinners, and will produce 67,500 yards of khadi of 30 inches width. The aggregate wages for the workers will be as follows:

Ginning 800 maunds of cotton:	Rs. 1,000
Carding ,, ,, ,,	Rs. 4,000
Spinning 700 ,, ,,	Rs. 7,000
Weaving 675 ,, yarn:	Rs. 6,750
Total:	Rs. 18,750

These figures do not include overhead expenses. There will of course be such expenditure, but it will be so little that it can be met from the Rs. 19,200 to be collected. The explanation for this lies in the provision for expenditure on spinning. We have to include this in the total cost of production, but actually we shall be paying nothing to the spinners. They count their labour as part of the cost of the cloth. The organizers are in a sense spared this expenditure, and they give a corresponding concession to the consumer-spinner. That is, though slivers cost them 12 annas a seer they supply these to the spinner at 6 annas a seer, and though they pay weavers at the rate of Rs. 10 a maund of yarn they charge the consumer-spinner Rs. 5 a maund. In other

words, a person spinning one maund of yarn gets ten rupees plus a maund of cotton as a gift.

We can put the same thing in another way and say that khadi for which one pays 9½ annas a yard in the stores costs this person only 3 annas a yard, leaving out of account his own labour. We can expect, therefore, a large number of people to agree to wear such cheap khadi.

But where is the money to come from? Devchandbhai has undertaken to enlist a thousand families or, failing that, to collect money or cotton. I myself cannot stay in Kathiawar. If the money is to be collected, it will have to be either by Devchandbhai or by me. As I too must share in the work, I have undertaken to collect the money. I have done this because of my full confidence in Kathiawaris. About 300 maunds of cotton has already been offered. This has brought in Rs. 1000. The balance remains to be collected. Even against the one thousand collected a like sum has already been spent and the amount, therefore, should not be taken into account. Hence, my demand is for the full sum of Rs. 19,200. Kathiawaris should find this sum for me, and that in two months. That is the active season. We shall have to get 800 maunds of cotton ginned by hand. The work is going on in Wadhwan, and the money for the cotton has to be paid immediately. Ginning can be continued only up to the end of Vaishakh[1].

This appeal is for donation of cotton, but it is more convenient to receive money. Moreover, the cotton which we buy for ginning is collected from one place and is, therefore, soft, so that in carding it half the labour required for carding the pressed cotton of bales is saved. I have actually seen some samples of cotton which could be used for spinning without first being carded.

With these advantages in mind, I appeal for contributions in cash. I hope I shall not be disappointed. People may send anything they wish. Contributions will be acknowledged in *Navajivan*. According to me, the responsibility of providing this money is especially of those who are not engaged in any active work. I hope every Kathiawari, wherever he may be living, will send whatever he can afford. I think I should also state that this sum of Rs. 19,200 represents the minimum amount which will need to be spent. If we get people who will spin, as contemplated in the Resolution, many more families will come forward. If so, it will be the duty of the people in Kathiawar to meet their

[1] A month in the Indian calendar, roughly corresponding to May

needs. Everyone, therefore, should give right now as much as he can. I hope readers of *Navajivan* will respond to this appeal of mine as generously as they did to the appeal for the Malabar Fund. Many Kathiawari women live outside Kathiawar. I expect something from them too.

I need not, of course, say that the Conference will maintain a complete account of how this money is spent. In every place, moreover, where cotton is distributed, accounts will be maintained under the supervision of the Conference Secretaries.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 12-4-1925

272. TO N. D. K.

It is not easy to explain the difference between violence and non-violence. But this can be said in a general way, that what counts is the spirit in which the person concerned acts. Arsenic given out of love may have the effect of *amrita*[1] on some and benefit them, but, given in hatred, it will act as poison and cause death. Lord Buddha left his innocent queen, and so attained his soul's salvation and helped that of the world. His action was a perfect expression of love. The action of the gambler who leaves his sleeping wife and goes out to play springs from violence and ignorance. Between these two instances fall all those given by you.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 12-4-1925

273. POLITICS

Most probably, this will be my last tour in Kathiawar this year. During this year I have given, I believe, as much attention to Kathiawar as was possible for me. I have collected all the information I could, and have not directly interfered in politics anywhere. This is true, of course, with regard to the whole of the country. Politics in the ordinary sense is not out of my mind, but I believe that there is much work which the people need to do among themselves.

[1] Mythological drink of the gods, supposed to confer immortality

I look upon spinning as the centre, or the foundation, of such work. Hence, I have concentrated all my attention on it. I attach equal importance to Hindus serving the *Antyajas* and have, therefore, given attention to that item too. What I have heard about the political policy being adopted in Gondal and Jamnagar has engaged my attention, but I have stated publicly my view that the problem there should not be, cannot be, dealt with through the Political Conference. I am still of this view.

"ANTYAJA" SCHOOL

One reason why I gave the first place to Botad during my present tour of Kathiawar was that even at the time of the last tour I had wished to visit the *Antyaja* school there but did not have time then. This school is run by Shri Dudabhai. I look upon him as a man of character among *Antyajas*. I have always admired his devotion to duty. I have brought up his daughter as mine. I have received an excellent opinion about Dudabhai from his superior. It was his desire, and mine, that I should personally see his work. I had heard, moreover, that the *Mahajan* at Botad was indifferent to the welfare of the *Antyajas*. And so I thought that, taking the opportunity of a visit to the *Antyaja* School, I would plead with the *Mahajan*.

The school was indeed a fine institution. The pupils would be second to none in regard to cleanliness or intelligence. Many of them were dressed in khadi. Most of the *Antyajas* here have given up meat-eating and liquor. They have a temple of their own, too, in running which they have to face considerable financial difficulty. They are without the amenity of a well and have difficulties about houses too. A well is being dug by the State, but there is not enough water in it. These are the hardships which the *Antyajas* live with. Many of them are actually weavers.

The *Mahajan* had also arranged a public meeting, which was very well attended. No one in the meeting opposed my views. It is my request to the *Mahajan* that those who disapprove of my activities should publicly express their opposition. If they do so with restraint, it will be easier for me to explain my views to them. Even if, however, they express their opposition in any terms and in any manner that they choose, I am in duty bound to put up with it. I am constrained to say this because I know that there are persons who oppose my views and do so with bitterness and exaggeration. I do not wish to say that those who support the movement for the removal of untouchability are also not guilty

in the same way. Exaggeration and bitterness deserve to be condemned, wherever they may be found.

FREEDOM OF OPINION

From Botad, we had to go to Ranpur of *Saurashtra* fame. Were it not that *Saurashtra* was being published from there, I doubt if we would have visited the place. Shri Amritlal Sheth knows my enthusiasm for the songs, the *rasas*[1] and the *bhajans*[2] of Kathiawar. He had invited some women who took delight in these, and had also arranged for the presence of a band of *bhajan* singers. I stayed there listening on, without feeling tired for a single moment. I was absorbed in the sweet music and words of the *bhajans* and the sound of the cymbals.

Ranpur's contribution of cotton has been good. They had promised me a spinning-wheel, but I did not get a good one. Shri Amritlal produced before me one which was supposed to be good. But a spinning-wheel is not an editorial in a newspaper for him to judge its worth. And so this thing had a cord which would hardly hold, do what one might. About the spindle, the less said the better. It was no more than a kind of thick needle, of the kind which was common in old days. The pulley looked like a pillar. What sort of yarn, then, could it produce?

I was something of an expert, and so could operate this wheel somehow. But I also thought that if I could pay some money and become a Director of *Saurashtra*, I should like to do so, and then, with the support of others' votes, I would promptly give short notice to Shri Amritlal to the effect that unless, within a specified time, he acquired the same proficiency in plying the spinning-wheel which he displayed in wielding the pen, he should cease to be the editor of *Saurashtra*. But, as the phrase goes, could one ever hope to see such a day? Who would give me money for this purpose? Even if some enemy of Amrital should give me the money, what guarantee was there that other Directors would support me? Supposing they agreed, where would I be if it turned out that Shri Amritlal, as the founder of *Saurashtra*, was beyond the authority of the Directors according to its Articles of Association? Thus, while spinning, I was, on the one hand, making many schemes to punish Amritlal; but on the other hand, I was being restrained by my regard for non-violence and the *bhajans* which were going on and the thought of their having

[1] A folk dance in Gujarat accompanied by singing and circular movement
[2] Devotional songs

been arranged by him had also a softening effect on my uncharitabe impulse.

Meanwhile, someone talked of my giving "blessings" to *Saurashtra*, and I saw placed in my hand an article captioned "At the Feet of Mahatmaji". Let alone dismissing Amritlal for his ineptitude in spinning, here was a suggestion for blessings! This was indeed adding insult to injury! There was, besides, Kathiawari courtesy. How to wriggle out of this web? I felt that I had been swept into the current, was being carried along helplessly and sinking. How could I give blessings to *Saurashtra* — a paper whose editor did not spin or card or persuade others to do so? But the Beloved One came to help. There were two or three sentences in "At the Feet of Mahatmaji" which enabled me to give my blessings, to preserve my non-violence, to respect truth and also incidentally write for *Navajivan* an article containing a mixture of sweet and bitter on the subject of the spinning-wheel. How could I have thus exposed Amritlal's weakness if I had not been able to give my sincere blessings?

That article captioned "At the Feet" had hinted that everyone should be free to express disagreement with me. I have, it said, always encouraged people to express sincere difference of opinion in a non-violent manner; how is it, then, that an attitude of intolerance has come to prevail among those who surround me—and so on. I liked these remarks and, though I had been requested merely to say a few words by way of blessings, I gladly spoke, instead, several sentences, for I believe that if we do not encourage complete freedom of opinion this country will never progress. Whether it be a so-called mahatma, like me, or King George V, even the humblest among the humble should be free to express his disagreement with him. If the mahatma does not listen with patience and courtesy to such expression of dissent, he would be in reality *alpatma*[1]; if the Emperor does not listen to it, the crown on his head would begin to shake that very instant and the time approach, one may be sure, for its fall.

Everyone cannot be of the same mind, and none is perfect. People holding different views on the same question can all be right each from his own point of view. It is necessary for progress that people understand all this. I, therefore, not only liked the remarks by the workers of *Saurashtra* but actually welcomed them. "May *Saurashtra* defend truthfully and non-violently true freedom of the individual, no matter if, for that purpose, it opposes

[1] A small soul, the opposite of mahatma



the spinning-wheel or any of the other things which for me are my very life—the paper has my blessings despite such opposition." Having thus given my unreserved blessings, I have earned the right to advise Amritlal and all the other workers of *Saurashtra* to take up the spinning-wheel. They should all card and spin, and persuade others to do likewise.

Charkha Ashram

The Ashram for whose sake I was invited to visit Sonegarh is not named Charkha Ashram. It is in fact called "Mahavira Ratna Ashram". But its chief object is to popularize the spinning-wheel and khadi. Its founder-leader is Munishri Charitravijayji. He himself always wears khadi. A number of buildings have already been put up, and a few more are to be built. The aim of the Ashram is to admit and educate pupils, and also to provide shelter to Jain monks. It is intended to instruct these monks not only in religion but also in spinning. In fact, some monks now living there spin regularly. I was extremely glad, and also surprised, to see all this. I saw in the whole thing the catholicity and courage of the Munishri in matters of religion.

Hence, in my reply to the address presented to me there, I explained how it was right and proper that sadhus should take up spinning, etc., and urged on them to remain firm in their plan, having made a happy beginning with it. It is my conviction that every sadhu and sannyasi in this age should ply the spinning-wheel. None of them can completely refrain from action and work. We cannot avoid these as long as we are in this body. Eating, drinking, breathing, going the rounds begging alms, preaching, all this is work. But sannyasis are not asked to refrain from these activities, for they are done in a disinterested spirit and for the service of others.

It is the duty of sadhus and sannyasis in this age to ply the spinning-wheel in the same disinterested spirit and for the same end. Since they obtain the means of livelihood from society, it is their duty to help preserve society. If they do not serve people afflicted with the plague, who else should? If a sadhu sitting in contemplation and hearing a cry for help does not immediately get up and run, he is no sadhu. Seeing a man stung by a serpent, a sadhu is in duty bound to suck the poison out of the wound and to run the risk of being poisoned himself. And, likewise, he is bound, for the general welfare, to ply the spinning-wheel in order to provide work to people in a country afflicted with unemployment and starvation, and so help in ending both. A Jain

sadhu can chant the *navakar mantra* with concentration while plying the spinning-wheel and can feel one with the world. It is likely enough that many sadhus, while sitting in contemplation, involuntarily let their thoughts roam on many things. A *mantra* chanted absent-mindedly will be almost ineffective. But a sadhu who repeats the *mantra* as he plies the spinning-wheel will, even if he does not become absorbed in the *mantra*, be doing public service by the amount of yarn he produces, will to that extent be helping to end the starvation in the country and adding to its wealth. Selfless service is the only true worship.

With these words, I urged the Munishri to remain firm in the plan which he had adopted after careful thinking, even if there should be opposition to it.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 12-4-1925

274. LETTER TO PURUSHOTTAM GANDHI

Sunday Chaitra Vad 4 [April 12, 1925][1]

CHI. PURUSHOTTAM[2],

I got your letter at Manavadar. May you live long and may all your pious wishes be fulfilled.

I am in Bombay today. Chi. Jamnadas is with me. Chi. Prabhudas met me.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

On Tuesday I shall tour the Jalalpur taluk.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 894. Courtesy: Narandas Gandhi

[1] From the postmark
[2] Son of Narandas Gandhi, Gandhiji's nephew

275. *INTERVIEW TO "THE BOMBAY CHRONICLE"*

BOMBAY,
[On or before *April 13, 1925*]

Questioned whether there was any truth in the suggestion that he had purposely avoided calling the meeting of the All-India Congress Committee, although more than three months had elapsed since the Congress session, Mahatma replied:

The charge is baseless. I have not convened a meeting of the A.I.C.C. for the simple and obvious reason that I have no new policy or new programme to place before the country. Nor have I heard of any new programme to be placed before the Committee by any member. The one that was mapped out at Belgaum is incredibly simple. It has only to be worked out by each province to the best of its ability. If, however, there is a desire on the part of any members for the A.I.C.C. to meet, I shall gladly ask Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to convene the meeting.

Is it true that some Committees are accepting cash value for yarn as subscription from members?

I know, that some Committees are doing it, and my own personal opinion is that it is wrong.

I understand that the secretaries of some Committees act as the buying agents of the members from whom they accept cash and purchase yarn on their behalf to be tendered to the Committees. Would there be anything wrong in such a practice?

It is not a desirable practice for secretaries to encourage.

Questioned whether there was any movement to challenge the representative character of the Swarajists in the Councils and the Assembly, Mahatmaji said that he had not heard of a single No-changer wishing, in any shape or form, to reopen the question. Even if any member desired to reopen it now at a meeting of the A.I.C.C., it was not open to him to do so at this stage. It could only be done at the next session of the Congress.

Asked to state his views on the Das-Birkenhead statements,[1] Mahatmaji replied that he had absolutely nothing to say, as he had not so far taken any part in the discussion.

[1] Lord Birkenhead, in reply to a question in Parliament on March 31, 1925, invited C. R. Das to dissociate himself from revolutionary activities and

Do you agree with the interpretation put by the Anglo-Indians and Europeans on Mr. Das's manifesto on non-violence?

No. I don't think it is a recantation of his former views on the subject. Mr. Das has merely reiterated his faith more clearly and more precisely.

What have you to say regarding Earl Winterton's[1] suggestion that Indians must first enlist the support of the Government of India and the local Governments for any proposals they have to make before approaching the Imperial Government or British Parliament?

In my opinion, the suggestion is a euphemistic way of saying that no proposals coming from the Nationalists would be considered by the India Office. Virtue lies in the India Office considering suggestions, irrespective of the *imprimature* of the Government of India, and even though they may come from, say, the revolutionaries.

What are the prospects of inter-communal unity at present?

I do not see any immediate prospect of achieving much. I am inclined to leave the question to work itself out. There are some diseases which, medical men tell us, are best left alone. The more they are pampered, the worse they become. This communal trouble appears just now to have developed that character.

The Bombay Chronicle, 13-4-1925

co-operate with the Government in repressing violence for the realization of responsible government.

On April 3, C. R. Das in a statement replied that the Bengal Act would not finally eradicate the evil and that he could do nothing unless a "favourable atmosphere" was created by the Government itself; *vide India in 1925-26*, pp. 2-3.

[1] Under Secretary of State for India. On April 6, he had rejected in Parliament a suggestion that C. R. Das, Gandhiji and other Indian leaders should be called to London for consultations during the Viceroy's visit.

276. LETTER TO G. D. BIRLA

Monday, Chaitra Krishna 5 [April 13, 1925][1]

BHAI GHANSHYAMDASJI,

Your two letters to hand. You have discontinued giving dates in your letters. Please do give the dates, for if you don't, I cannot know during my tour which letter was written when.

Hakimji has gone to Europe. I have enquired of Khwaja Saheb if the money has been received. Please let me know when you get any news.

On making enquiries from Jamnalalji's firm I learnt that they have so far received Rs. 30,000. The accountant acknowledged receipt for Rs. 10,000 on 1-11-24 and for Rs. 20,000 on 5-1-25.

If the doctors are hopeful, why do you have any apprehensions about your wife dying? I know from experience that it is very difficult to control our passions; but then that is our duty. In this age of *Kali*[2] I regard *Ramanama* as a most invaluable thing. I know of friends who have attained great peace by repeating *Ramanama*. *Ramanama* is only God's name. The [*dwa*]*dashamantra* also gives the same result. It is better to chant a name to which one is accustomed. One is always confronted with the question: How can the mind be controlled in this passion-ridden world? I am very sad to read journals that are published nowadays propagating birth-control. I find many writers holding the view that sex-enjoyment is our duty. In such an atmosphere my upholding the doctrine of self-restraint must seem very queer. But how could I disregard my own experience? I have no doubt that one can become completely free from passion. It is the duty of everyone to try to do so. Of all the means for this, the most potent is the chanting of *Ramanama*. Chanting *Ramanama* the first thing in the morning and praying to Him to make one passionless does certainly make people passionless—some today and others tomorrow, provided the prayer is sincere, from the depth of one's heart. The main thing is that God's formless image should be constantly present in our mind, before our eyes. This can easily be done with practice.

[1] From the circumstances mentioned, it is evident that the letter was written in 1925.

[2] Darkness; strife

I shall reach Bengal on the 1st and will leave Calcutta for Faridpur the same day.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS

From the Hindi original: C.W. 6111. Courtesy: G. D. Birla

277. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BOMBAY[1]

April 13, 1925

Mahatma Gandhi said they had heard three speeches that day and Mr. Patel had asked him to place such a programme before the country as would enthuse the people, or that they should find out for themselves such a programme.[2] He did not think that the people had anything to seek beyond charkha to enthuse them to a proper pitch, as well as to make them fit for a fight with the bureaucracy. They had failed because they were not really earnest in their aims. The charkha taught them to have immense patience, and it also taught them to be brave. It taught them to do their work bravely and with faith. Yet the people were unable to spin for even half an hour a day. He was firmly of the opinion that if they would merely spin, they would get all they wanted. Since 1919 he had been telling them about these things, and what more could he tell them now? If they really sought enthusiasm let them take to spinning, as without spinning they could not get swaraj. They would go on with their fighting between Hindus and Muslims, between Brahmins, and non-Brahmins, *avarnas*[3] and *savarnas*—he had learnt these terms in Travancore—and there were also other communities to fight with. The country had to make sacrifices for swaraj and for satyagraha. He was the originator of the term satyagraha and he knew something about it.

Without satyagraha, Mahatmaji continued, they would never get swaraj. He would be satisfied even if they practised satyagraha between Hindus and Muslims and so on, but the people were not ready even for that small thing. The people were ready, however, for *duragraha*[4] and they were ready to break each other's heads, and after doing it, they wanted to run away. Those were not the ways of winning swaraj. For satyagraha, they must have a peaceful atmosphere and that was not there. He was not ashamed to own up that their meeting was held in the Congress House grounds because they did not

[1] Under the auspices of the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee at the Congress House, Girgaum to observe the Jallianwala Bagh Day. Sarojini Naidu presided.

[2] Patel had referred to the reduction in the number of Congress members from 25 lakhs to 11 thousand as a result of the spinning franchise.

[3] Those outside the four castes

[4] Improper and wilful insistence; the opposite of satyagraha

expect to get a large number of people if they had their meeting on the Chowpatty. He himself had never lost hope despite the present position, for as long as there was satyagraha in the country they were sure of winning swaraj. The only thing was that the necessary peaceful atmosphere was not there. In spite of all their disappointments, he was of opinion that they had not lost anything during the last five years; on the other hand, they had gained something. It would never do to lose heart or do nothing. They must go on with redoubled efforts and that was essential if they were bent upon winning the fight. Even if there were ten true men in the Congress, he would be quite satisfied; on the other hand, it was no use having lakhs of men who did not mean business. Formerly, they had a four-anna franchise and they had lakhs of members and yet they had not got swaraj. Because he was convinced that they would not get swaraj by these means, he had got the franchise altered, for he knew that as long as there were not even a few men who were ready to make sacrifice for the country, they would never hope to win in the end.

They must, proceeded Mahatmaji, be resolved to win in spite of all obstacles in their way. They knew that the Government were determined that Indians should fight with each other. But how many people were there in this country who were equally determined not to fight whatever happened? Only the charkha could give them sufficient enthusiasm for satyagraha, and they had to prepare themselves by spinning. If they wanted to offer satyagraha, they might do so on their own account, but he would be no party to it. He knew something about satyagraha, for he was the author of it. If he did not resort to satyagraha, it was not because he did not want it, but because he knew that the country was not ready for it. As long as they had not done the three things that they were required to do, they could not be said to be ready for satyagraha. Although it was always possible to offer individual satyagraha, he did not think that the country was ripe for a mass satyagraha. Between the 6th and 13th April a whole cycle's history was written, and when he found that they were ready for satyagraha, he would be the first man to tell them so, but he did not believe in bluffing the Government as this Government was not to be bluffed by such threats. It was a difficult thing to fool the Government. Speaking for himself, he would say that he would never give up the struggle as long as his object was not won. If they wanted to call themselves satyagrahis, he would ask them to unite with each other, take to charkha, and remove untouchability. If they did that, they were sure to win.

Summarizing his speech in a couple of sentences in English, the Mahatma said for him there was no swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity, the charkha and the removal of untouchability. Without those three things there could never be swaraj. Satyagraha meant the strictest adherence to truth and *shanti*[1]

[1] Peace

and ahimsa and without these there could not be satyagraha. There could be a satyagraha without these three things, but in the satyagraha which he wanted these three were the indispensable things.

The Bombay Chronicle, 14-4-1925

278. TELEGRAM TO HARIHAR SHARMA[1]

[On or after *April 15, 1925*][2]

PRESENTLY GOING BENGAL. AM WRITING BAJPAI AGAIN.

GANDHI

From a microfilm: S.N. 11293

279. SPEECH AT KARADI

April 15, 1925

I am surprised as well as happy to see the quiet in the meeting. I have lost my voice and hence am unable to talk audibly. I feel therefore happy that just now you are all sitting quietly. I liked the children playing cymbals while chanting the name of God. Only those who have attended *bhajan* parties know the charm of cymbals; and I know it very well.

Many of you are wearing white caps and I like that very much. I don't know if you have only put these on for today's meeting. Since your caps are of khadi, I assume that your other clothes too are of khadi. If they are not, I would advise you to have these made of khadi. You must realize that much time has been wasted; we should not be thinking of these things now. We should have no love for foreign and mill-made cloth and we should not be ashamed of wearing khadi. We should not find it heavy. How can the cloth made by our poor spinners and weavers be heavy? It is our fault if we spin thick [yarn]. Good cotton from which thin yarn can be drawn is available, then why should we wear coarse clothes? I do not see women here wearing khadi. Women should not need foreign or mill-made cloth. It is not

[1] Formerly of the Ganganath Vidyalaya, Baroda; also called "Anna" (brother)

[2] This was in reply to the addressee's telegram dated April 15, 1925 from Madras which read: "Sammelan insists depositing money its own name opinion differs other matters also making position awkward definite settlement indispensable wire here when shall I meet you postponement harmful."

nice to come here wearing mill-made cloth. If you are going to do that, it is much better for me to sit at Sabarmati. But I have yielded to temptation in coming here. My co-workers have been similarly tempted by the same desire and said, "Invite him, perhaps good may result from his coming." I want swaraj and so do you. How it would come, no one knows. Take it that swaraj without khadi would be useless. Without khadi, the purity and independence necessary in life cannot come. I know that those who wear khadi can also be fraudulent and unclean. But we should know what we are doing when we wear it. As long as we do not put it on we can do neither our religious nor our secular task.

As long as we keep the *Antyajas* at arm's length, the rest of the world would do the same to us. Untouchability has no place in our religion. In the matter of toilet let there be untouchability. To say that a man is born untouchable is dishonest, immoral and monstrous. A man who says that man is untouchable by birth is wrong.

Thirdly, there is alcohol. *Kolis* and *Dublas* are given to drinking. Imagine what a deadly enemy alcohol must be that it won't let go of you. It must be given up. The best recourse for giving it up is to take the name of Rama early in the morning. Weep before God and ask to be delivered from foreign goods, meat-eating and loose-living. It was God who rescued Prahlad[1]. If you want to pray to Him by another name, do so. But let me tell you that pray you must.

The work of Hindu-Muslim unity has received a setback. I have myself been defeated. The whole of yesterday Shaukat Ali and Shuaib were with me. I could not bring them here because they are undergoing penance in order to dispel the fears the people of Bombay have about Khilafat. I have washed my hands of it. At present my advice won't be of any help. My advice is for manly men and not for cowards. If someone swears at me, not to swear in return, if someone hits me, not to hit him back; that is my dharma. I can't expound this to other people, so I have given it up. The Muslims have gone mad and so too the Hindus. They enrage each other. If I sit down to sum up [the position] in India, Muslims are more to be blamed than Hindus.

[1] A devotee of God cruelly persecuted by his unbelieving father Hiranyakashipu, a demon-king. Hiranyakashipu was eventually killed by Narasinha, an incarnation of Vishnu, who emerged from a pillar of his palace to rescue Prahlad.

Should I give up their friendship for that reason? A father knows the defects of his son but can he give him up for that reason? The father does not curse him. I shall tell him that he goes to women of ill fame and drinks, and that he should reform himself. Surely I won't tell him to go and drown himself in the sea. Similarly I cannot disown Muslims even if they harass Hindus for no fault of theirs. I shall try to please them. I shall go on telling them that what they are doing is *adharma* and not Islam. I will keep on saying so while facing their kicks. There is none today to listen to this advice of mine. I affirm that there is no way out for the two communities but to unite some day. Were I to die tomorrow, you would still go to one who says the same thing. One must, of course, give up fear. This is a movement for overcoming fear. That is all I had to say. It is not that one has to touch an *Antyaja* always. It is also enough if you cleanse your heart about Hindu-Muslim unity. It is easy to unite with the *Antyajas*. It is also not difficult to see that it is your dharma to wear khadi.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, Vol. VII, pp. 347-49

280. NOTES

To Correspondents

I have before me a pile of correspondence from all parts of the world which demands my personal attention. That part of it which can be disposed of by my assistants receives prompt enough attention. But there is a daily growing accumulation which demands personal perusal and replies. My travelling this year has become far more intense than during any other period. The correspondence can only receive attention during the odd moments I can spare after writing for *Young India* and *Navajivan*. The result is that the correspondence has grown beyond my capacity for response. I have still four to six months' programme of travelling cut out for me, unless I become incapacitated. My correspondents will therefore please forgive me if I do not answer them in time or at all. They will understand that the delay or the omission is not due to want of will or courtesy.

The foregoing remarks apply, too, to the correspondence I receive for *Young India* or *Navajivan*. I should like to give it more time than I do. But I am helpless. I know that I have often

to neglect important communications. This rush is the evil of modern life. It recoils with double effect upon an ambitious man like me. Some of my dearest friends have often advised me to throw overboard some activities and rest and be thankful. But I daily realize to my cost the truth of the saying that man is a creature of circumstances. The saying connotes only half the truth. But the half that is true is potent enough to compel this apology to my correspondents. But I may tell them that I am trying to reform myself and insist on taking time for correspondence. I must try to re-impose on myself more days of silence than one per week. I must plead with the Bengal friends to lead the way.

The Bengal Tour

This lame apology brings me to the Bengal tour. Telegrams before me tell me that the programme extends to five weeks. I hope that the organizers have taken the Mondays into account. These are days of obligatory silence and freedom from movement as a rule. But I would like the organizers, if possible, to leave Wednesdays too for silence so as to enable me to cope with all the writing I have to do from week to week. It was my wont to carry a spinning-wheel with me. I have now altered the arrangement and ask those who feed me to provide me with a wheel too in working order. I find that the new arrangement enables me to examine the local wheels and as generally my host tries to provide me with the best working wheel, it enables me to gauge the capacity of the place visited for yarn production. For, when I find the best available wheel to be an indifferent piece of furniture, I know that the production is poor. I hope therefore that at every place the host will kindly provide me with the best wheel available in it, and find me time for spinning. Thirdly, I hope that instructions will be issued to the crowds of people gathering not to shout or make noise and to keep a clear passage to the platform. Often there is a frightful waste of time in passing through these vast crowds. When volunteers have to form themselves into chains, it shows that the people have not yet been disciplined to obey the rules regulating crowds. I know that it is possible to discipline the crowds if leaflets giving detailed instructions are distributed beforehand and instructions are given repeatedly by word of mouth from the platform before the commencement of meetings. Crowds should also be instructed not to touch my feet. I have no desire for such homage. The homage I do desire is, for people who wish to honour me to practise what they profess to like of my preaching. It is enough if they

stand erect with chests forward and salaam, or bow, if they wish to, with folded hands. If I could have my way, I would discard that too. There is no difficulty in reading affection in the eyes. No further gesture is necessary. But what I would love to see is that the crowds I expect to see in Bengal will be all clad in khaddar. Not that a single person who is not so clad should be turned out. Those who do not believe in khaddar may come in their foreign or mill-spun and mill-made cloth by all means. But the vast majority who I understand believe in khaddar should at least practise what they believe. Let them demonstrate their belief in their own persons. Lastly, I hope that all parties will attend these meetings. I would love to see people belonging to all the different schools and different races not excluding Englishmen. May I also add that it will be better if the local organizers will arrange more for personal and private (not secret) chats than for huge gatherings for speech-making? That spectacular part may be necessary, but it should occupy the least time. I would naturally meet the students. Ladies' meetings are a feature everywhere and I would now like a meeting of untouchables too in every place. And if, as in these parts of India, there are separate quarters for them in Bengal, I should like to visit them. In a word, let the tour be a business tour and the mission one of peace and goodwill.

All-India Cow-Protection Sabha

This movement for founding a permanent All-India Cow-Protection Organization has advanced a step further. The readers will see, if they have not done so already, an advertisement convening a meeting in Bombay of the general public for the purpose of considering and, if found desirable after consideration, of adopting the constitution. The reader has a rough but accurate translation of the constitution which is drawn up in Hindi. The meeting is to take place in Madhav Bagh justly famous for initiating such movements, precisely at 8 p.m. on the 28th instant. I trust that everyone who appreciates the constitution and the methods recommended therein for ensuring cow-protection as far as it is humanly possible and along the lines of least resistance will attend. The protection is to be ensured not by energetic or even wild appeals to non-Hindus but by ridding Hinduism of the blemishes and corruption that have crept into it. The constitution insist upon and emphasizes its economic character and if successful it will provide cities within a measurable distance of time with the cleanest and perfectly sterilized milk that

they have hitherto had. It is designed to annex tanneries to the institutions that might be founded or affiliated by this organization. I invite all, big and small, Rajas and Maharajas, whoever may see these lines to study the constitution and if they find that it is generally acceptable to them, to attend the meeting and bless it by their presence. And those who cannot for some unavoidable reason attend the meeting will oblige the organizers by sending letters of sympathy or even their contributions, whether in kind or in cash.

Young India, 16-4-1925

281. MY POSITION

It was for the first time and in Bombay that I heard, the other day, some complaint about my not having called a meeting of the A.I.C.C. A press reporter came to me and tackled me on the question to which he seemed to attach the highest importance. I could not understand his agitation for some minutes for I was innocent of any newspaper controversy on the subject. My incessant travelling has practically cut me off from the newspaper world. It was only when Mr. Shastri[1] told me in Madras, some days after the event, that I knew Sir Abdur Rahim was superseded. I do not regret this gross ignorance of mine on current events. I know that I am apparently useless for making any impression on such events. I can show no immediate remedy for such ills as the supersession of Sir Abdur Rahim. My ignorance of current events, therefore, does not matter much. I must apply myself to preparing efficient non-violent self-sacrificing workers with a living faith in hand-spinning and khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity and, if they are Hindus, in removal of untouchability also. For the current year at any rate, this is the national programme and no other.

I do not need to worry about the purely "political" programme which the Congress has entrusted to the Swarajists who are an integral part of it. As a time economist I would be foolish if I bothered my head about things which with my eyes open and full trust I have handed over to a body of men who are at least as capable as myself, if not much more, in the domain which they have specially selected for themselves. It is enough

[1] V. S. Srinivasa Sastri (1869-1946); scholar and statesman; president, Servants of India Society, 1916-27

for me to watch from a distance with admiration the valiant effort of Pandit Motilal Nehru in the Assembly, the brilliance of Deshbandhu who at the cost of his health pitted himself against an all-powerful Government and came out victorious each time the Government gave him battle, or the marvellous cohesion of the Swarajists in the Central Provinces, or the courteous and almost unperceived encroachments of Mr. Jayakar. I would not insult these great workers by my officious and indifferent attention. I help them by my prayers for their success and by ceaseless effort to prepare the nation from within in the only manner I know.

I know of no division in the Congress ranks. I shall be party to no division. The Working Committee has a majority which does not wholly share my views. It is there to keep me straight. I shall never do a single thing during the year which my precious colleagues do not endorse. I am in correspondence with them as to the advisability of holding a meeting of the Working Committee. I am anxious not to take their time unnecessarily. Similar considerations guide me in not worrying the A.I.C.C. It is a body which has to be summoned only for giving new directions or framing new programmes. There are no new directions to be given, no new programme to be settled. It is no light thing to bring from long distances nearly four hundred men, the majority of whom are poor and all of whom are or should be busy. I have, therefore, purposely refrained from convening the A.I.C.C. But if there is a large body of members who wish to have a meeting called, and if they would name the purpose, I would have it summoned without avoidable delay.

What is most necessary, however, is for Provinces to organize themselves. Their Committees may meet frequently. We have practical provincial autonomy in the Congress. Let each Province honestly and industriously work the franchise. There seems to be a disposition to regard its failure as a foregone conclusion. Let me inform the pessimists and alarmists that the spinning movement is gaining, not losing, ground. There are workers all over India who are working at it silently, surely and effectively. The production and quality of khaddar have considerably improved. Many interesting experiments are being made to make khaddar cheaper and more durable. Tirupur perhaps heads the list. But Tirupur is only a sample of what is going on. The Gujarat experiment has only just begun. It has in it immense potentialities. It is an attempt to reduce the price of khaddar from nine annas to three annas per yard and at the same time to improve its quality. The indirect effect of the franchise has been already

great. The direct effect depends upon the capacity and integrity of those who are working it. My advice to them is:

1. Canvass only for those who would spin themselves, but take in all who would bring their own yarn.

2. But be detached even regarding self-spinners. You must not pamper them. The franchise is a privilege. Those only are to be valued who will value the privilege and work to retain it.

3. Do not be disappointed if you have only a few members so long as they are true members.

4. Do not take money for yarn for you to convert it into yarn. Throw the burden of supplying the yarn on those who want to become members. You may open yarn depots for the sake of those who may want yarn. Let the Provincial Khaddar Boards undertake the supply of yarn.

Let me make my position clear. I am wedded to the threefold programme. I cannot tease Hindu-Muslim unity into life. It, therefore, requires no outward activity from me. As a Hindu I shall serve as many Mussalmans as will let me serve them. I shall advise those who seek my advice. For the rest, I cease to worry about what I cannot mend. But I have a living faith in unity coming. It must come even if it has to do so after a few pitched battles. If there are men who will fight, nobody on earth can prevent them.

Untouchability is doomed. It may take time. But the progress made is truly marvellous. It is more still in the thought world. But in action too one notices the effect everywhere. It was a glorious sight, the other day, to see in Mangrol not one of the ladies raising her hand against untouchables sitting side by side with them. And when they were actually brought in, none of these brave women moved. It is not a solitary instance. But I know that there is a dark side to the picture. Hindus must unremittingly toil away at the reform. The larger the number of workers the more substantial the result.

But the most encouraging results are to be seen in spinning. It is spreading to the villages. I make bold to say that it is the most effective method of village reconstruction. There are thousands of women hungering to spin, because they want a few coppers to find them food. There are no doubt villages where the villagers do not need any supplementary income. I would not touch them for the time being. Just as I would not pamper self-spinners for the franchise, so would I not pamper spinners for money. They must spin if they need, not otherwise. The greatest difficulty in the way of workers is to induce men and women to

spin or to do any other work even though they need some work. They either live on charity or are content to starve to death. There are millions in India who have lost all interest in life. We can only touch them by ourselves spinning. I am interested in producing the spinning atmosphere. When many people do a particular thing, it produces a subtle unperceivable effect which pervades the surroundings and which proves infectious. I want that atmosphere so that the idle hands I have described will be irresistibly drawn to the wheel. They will be so drawn when they see people spinning who do not need to. Hence the franchise.

But if the Congress workers do not wish to take part in the work, let them revise the programme next year. I shall resolutely refrain from any fight next year either. I shall swear by the franchise even if only a few spin to become members. But I have no desire to retain my hold on the Congress by mechanical means. I simply state my limitations. I cannot work at the reforms without any power behind. That power can only come by organizing the people either for violence or non-violence. I can only try to organize them for non-violence or fail. There is no indication of failure yet. There is every hope of success. Organization for non-violence means giving villagers remunerative work to do and inducing them to give up some of their bad habits and to bring into being consciousness of one nationality by making untouchables proud of their Hinduism and bringing Hindus, Mussalmans and others to believe in and to work for the common cause with a full heart. I have no aptitude for any other work along political lines till the three things are done. I am as keen as the tallest among us to establish swaraj at the earliest moment. I am as impatient of wrong as the most ardent patriot. But I recognize the nation's limitations. I must work according to my lights to remove those limitations. It may be a long and dreary route but I know that it will be found to be the shortest. But all need not think alike, do not think alike. If there is an overwhelming body of opinion in the country that requires a change of methods and change of the franchise even during the current year, they can have it if they can ensure a full house of the A.I.C.C., and secure an overwhelming majority. Though it may be a straining of the Congress constitution I will not stand in the way of a vast majority of the members of the A.I.C.C. altering even the constitution. The A.I.C.C. can take such a drastic step if this urgency can be demonstrated and an overwhelming majority demand it. But if there is nothing to warrant such a change, then it behoves every one of us to rivet our attention to the franchise without interfering

with the Swarajist part of the Congress activity in any shape or form. Half an hour to be honestly given by every Congressman and Congresswoman to the wheel and whole time to its organizing by those who have an aptitude for it, is not an exorbitant demand for the national cause.

Young India, 16-4-1925

282. *OUR UNFORTUNATE SISTERS*

Of all the addresses I received in the South the most touching was one on behalf of the *Devadasis*—a euphemism for prostitutes. It was prepared and brought by people who belong to the clan from which these unfortunate sisters are drawn. I understood from the deputation that brought the address[1] that reform from within was going on but that the rate of progress was still slow. The gentleman who led the deputation told me that the public in general was apathetic to the reform. The first shock I received was at Cocanada. And I did not mince matters when I spoke to the men of that place. The second was at Barisal where I met a large number of these unfortunate sisters. Whether they be known as *Devadasis* or by any other name, the problem is the same. It is a matter of bitter shame and sorrow, of deep humiliation, that a number of women have to sell their chastity for man's lust. Man the law-giver will have to pay a dreadful penalty for the degradation he has imposed upon the so-called weaker sex. When woman, freed from man's snares, rises to the full height and rebels against man's legislation and institutions designed by him, her rebellion, no doubt non-violent, will be none the less effective. Let the Indian man ponder over the fate of the thousands of sisters who are destined to a life of shame for his unlawful and immoral indulgence. The pity of it is that the vast majority of the men who visit these pestilential haunts are married men and, therefore, commit a double sin. They sin against their wives to whom they have sworn allegiance and they sin against the sisters whose purity they are bound to guard with as much jealousy as that of their own blood-sisters. It is an evil which cannot last for a single day, if we men of India realize our own dignity.

If many of the most respectable among us were not steeped in the vice this kind of indulgence would be regarded as a

[1] For Gandhiji's reply, *Vide*, "Speech at Ashram, Pudupalayam", 21-3-1925.

greater crime than the stealing of a banana by a hungry man or the picking of a pocket by a youngster who is in need of money. What is worse or more hurtful to society—to steal property or to steal the honour of a woman? Let me not be told that the public woman is party to the sale of her honour, but not the millionaire on the race-course whose pocket is picked by a professional pickpocket. Who is worse—an urchin who picks a pocket or a scoundrel who drugs his victim and then makes him sign away the whole of his property? Does not man by his subtle and unscrupulous ways first rob woman of her noblest instinct and then make her partner in the crime committed against her? Or are some women, like *Panchamas*, born to a life of degradation? I ask every young man, married or unmarried, to contemplate the implications of what I have written. I cannot write all I have learnt about this social disease, this moral leprosy. Let his imagination fill in the rest and then let him recoil with horror and shame from the sin if he has himself been guilty of it. And let every pure man, wherever he is, do what he can to purify his neighbourhood. I know that the second part is easier written than practised. It is a delicate matter. But for its very delicacy, it demands the attention of all thoughtful men. Work among the unfortunate sisters must be left everywhere to experts. My suggestion has reference to work among the visitors to these houses of ill-fame.

Young India, 16-4-1925

283. ON "STONING TO DEATH"

I had no desire to open the columns of *Young India* to a dissertation on the *Quran* on any subject treated in that holy Book. But having ventured on a discussion myself on "stoning to death" penalty,[1] I could not very well refuse admission to Khwaja Saheb's article,[2] in order that the readers of *Young India* may authoritatively know that the *Quran* does not countenance stoning to death in any case whatsoever and does not punish apostasy during man's life on earth. But this shall be the last mention in *Young India* about "stoning to death" penalty.

Young India, 16-4-1925

[1] *Vide* pp. 411-6.

[2] In this article, Khwaja Kamaluddin wrote:

"The Mahatma has done a piece of service to Islam by entering into

284. IN DEFENCE[1]

To

THE EDITOR, *Young India*,

AHMEDABAD

SIR,

In the course of an article on Travancore[2] published in your esteemed paper, Mr. M. K. Gandhi refers to the drink evil and says, giving some facts and figures:—

"From all one can see the State is looking upon the increasing revenue with philosophic calmness, if not with pleasure."

I am afraid that the above statement is thoroughly unfounded. . . . I shall only place some facts. . . . These are culled from the report published last week of a Committee of officials and non-officials appointed by His Highness's Government to submit their proposals to enable Government to attain success in their declared policy of prohibition by slow and easy stages. . . . For further particulars about the measures taken to minimize the drink evil, I would refer you to *The Times of India* of 31st March, 1925.

A TRAVANCOREAN

I was not unprepared for some such defence. But I remain unrepentant. I have paid unstinted tribute to the Travancore administration. But the *abkari*[3] policy admits of no such defence. The extracts quoted read like pages from British Administration reports. Liquor is not a matter to trifle with. No soft and easy-going policy will cope with the tremendous evil. Nothing short of total prohibition can save the people from the curse.

Young India, 16-4-1925

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the controversy on the penalty of apostasy in Islam. . . .

"The *Quran* admittedly allows freedom of conscience. It respects personal judgment in religion. 'No compulsion in religion' is the golden rule promulgated exclusively by the *Quran*. Apostasy, after all, is a change of opinion in religion. If it is punished, it is compulsion in religion, and therefore contrary to the *Quran*. . . . I agree with the Mahatma when he says that 'everything has to submit to the test of reason.' The *Quran* says the same thing when preaching its truth . . ."

1 Only excerpts of the quoted letter are reproduced here.

2 *Vide* "All about Travancore", 26-3-1925.

3 Excise

285. *SPEECH AT GURUKUL, SUPA*[1]

April 16, 1925

Last time I had decided to come here but could not. I have come today; but it will be apparent from my voice that I cannot speak loudly and for any length of time. I am unwell for the last four or five days and am therefore unfit for travel. But I had given promises to many and wanted to fulfil as many engagements as the body would permit. As I am not well, I will have to leave the place immediately. Otherwise I would have passed some time here and left after cultivating closer acquaintance with you.

I am pleased to see the boys. Here there should be no need to honour me with an address. My visit to this place is no unusual event. There are hardly one or two *gurukuls*[2] which I have not visited. The Kangri Gurukul is the parent of all such institutions and I have visited it several times. My relation with Swamiji[3] is of long standing. It dates back to the year 1908, the period of the struggle in South Africa. At that time I had not met Swamiji; but he had sent me an account, with details, of the work done by his students. The bond which was formed then has continued right up to the present day. Please do not be misled by any comments of mine about the Arya Samaj which you may have read, for, as my conscience bears testimony, my criticism is always prompted by love. My relation with the Gurukul is a spiritual bond and is unbreakable. I shall tell you what that work done by the students of the Kangri Gurukul was which created the bond between us.

When the satyagrahis in South Africa were filling the prisons, money was pouring in from India. At that time satyagraha was a new idea. Nobody could believe that Indians, most of them illiterate, would fight against the Europeans and go to jail. But they did. This touched the heart of India and funds began to be collected. The students of the Gurukul asked themselves what they could do. Obviously, they had no money. If they had, they would not have deserved the title of *brahmacharis*. They approached Swamiji. He advised them to do manual labour. A

[1] In Bardoli taluk, in reply to an address of welcome

[2] Forest abodes which served as educational institutions in olden times

[3] Swami Shraddhanand

dam was under construction at the place. Swamiji wrote a note requesting that his students might be employed on daily wages. The contractor was only too glad to do so. He offered the students better wages than what the labourers got. The students were happy. They wanted to remit the money to Africa. The jobber felt that it would be generous of him to pay a little more to the students. A few days passed. The students did more work than the labourers. Even their leaders feared that this might not last long. But the students did not get tired right till the end. They worked with the same energy up to the last day. I advise you to do what these students did. You should engage yourselves in a *yajna* of manual labour for the country. The work done for the good of others is called a *yajna*. You should perform the *yajna* of manual labour, like those students, for your country. If elders cannot do much physical labour, they may simply work with the pick-axe or clean latrines.

Have you heard the story of the Kangri Gurukul? (If you have not heard it, your teacher should be dismissed). Near it the Ganga flows in torrents. Tigers and leopards infested the area and the forest was dense. Swamiji was tall like a rock. Little boys like you could hardly reach Swamiji's ears even by standing upon one another. He enrolled such boys and got everything done by them. Even now the leopards are there, but the boys were not afraid even of leopards. This is how the Gurukul was established. There is certainly self-interest in making the Gurukul a beautiful place, but the work is also spiritually uplifting. You should do the *yajna* of mental work along with that of physical labour. The mind should be trained, not in order to amass wealth but to serve the country. Even the *yajna* of spiritual striving should be for the service of the country. With every gift we possess we should perform a *yajna* for the service of the country and in the cause of dharma. We can thus engage ourselves in three types of *yajna*. One should remain a celibate up to the age of 25. Unless an institution gives such training that up to that age the student is not disturbed by physical desire, it does not deserve the name of Gurukul. Children and sannyasis are alike. Children drink in purity of mind and self-control with their mother's milk. If one cannot observe celibacy throughout life, there is the stage of married life. One should observe the rules of that stage and lead a life of self-control. I wish that you should learn to lead a life of self-control, and bless you that you may.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, VII, pp. 357-59

286. REMARKS IN GURUKUL VISITORS' BOOK

April 16, 1925

Thank God that my long-felt desire to see this Gurukul is fulfilled today. May the institution prosper and the students studying there turn out true workers for the religion and the country.

The Bombay Chronicle, 30-4-1925

287. SPEECH IN "ANTYAJA" ASHRAM, NAVSARI

April 16, 1925

Your duty is twofold. It is your duty as *Antyajas* to serve others. You are all boys and generally it is believed that boys do not act on their own responsibility. They are led by their teachers or those in charge of the institution. But this rule does not apply to you. Although you are boys, you are also grown-ups. There is a girl named Lakshmi accompanying me. I would tell her that a great responsibility lies on her, that other *Antyajas* would be judged through her. You have to show to the world, which at present holds down the *Antyajas*, that there is no difference between them and others. There are good and bad people among both. Hindu society does not understand even this simple thing. This Ashram is a means of educating it so that it may understand that. If it succeeds, the problem of untouchability may be solved to some extent. What is children's duty? You should not eat forbidden articles. Banish from your mind the very thought of doing so. A person who is accustomed to eat unwholesome things will not like to eat good things, if offered. It is your duty to remain scrupulously clean. You should brush your teeth properly. They should be as white as milk. Eyes and nose should also be kept clean. On rising from bed, you should start repeating Rama's name. The air where we live should be kept pure. You should maintain internal purity and always speak the truth.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, VII, pp. 360-61

288. *SPEECH AT PARSIS' MEETING, NAVSARI*[1]

April 16, 1925

Another interesting item during the visit to Navasari was the meeting with the Parsi friends. Gandhiji delivered himself of his whole soul before them. I dare say it stirred the Parsi friends through and through. His friendship with and debt to the Parsi community, said Gandhiji, was an old story. It was Parsi Rustomji who, at grave risk to his life and property, gave him refuge whilst the Euorpeans in South Africa lynched him and wanted his head on a charger. It was Dadabhai Naoroji at whose feet he sat when he first went to England. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta guided his footsteps when in 1896 he returned from South Africa. Even today amongst his closest associates were grand daughters of Dadabhai Naoroji, and Mithubhai Petit and Mr. Bharucha who think of naught else but the propagation of khaddar. How then could he find any fault with that community? If at all he could get into closer touch with it he would feel himself blessed. It was Ratan Tata[2] whom Gokhale asked him to look to when he wanted money for South Africa, and he responded magnificently. At the time of the Swaraj Fund collections it was a Parsi who headed the list of donors. Dodds had placed Parsis at the top amongst the benefactors of mankind, for charity is a quality of the soul and they excelled in it. If they had given out of the largeness of the charity so much in the past, would they not go a step further? He wanted no money, but charity in the noblest sense of the term. He wanted the Parsi sisters' heart for the poor of the land. He wanted them to give up their silk saris and take to the exclusive use of khaddar. Mrs. Perin Captain, Mrs. Nargis Captain and Miss Mithubai Petit were devoting themselves heart and soul to getting fine khaddar embroidered by poor Parsi women, and to selling it to rich Parsi and Hindu sisters. Would they not purchase khaddar from these sisters? But all were not rich. The majority were poor, and the thing that even the poorest could give was half an hour's labour on the spinning-wheel everyday. That was the only way in which they could identify themselves with the poor.

His other request to the community was to give up the use and sale of liquor. He knew it was a difficult thing to give up liquor. It was with very great difficulty that he could persuade his friend Parsi Rustomji to take a vow not to touch liquor. And even he, brave as he was, went back on his vow, after a certain time. But the attempt must be made and seriously and

[1] Extracted from Mahadev Desai's article "With Gandhiji in Gujarat".

[2] 1871-1918; Parsi philanthropist who sent large sums of money for the satyagrahis in South Africa; *vide* Vol. XI, pp. 248-53.

once for all. They must understand that the community could not have an exhuastless stream of Tatas and Readymoneys and once a vicious habit contaminated it, the spring was sure to dry up. It would mean the ruin of a little community like theirs. It was not difficult for them to give up dealing in liquor. Theirs was an enterprising community. They could find any amount of other business to do. It was far easier for a little community like theirs to carry out the reform than for an unwieldy community like the Hindu. His heart wept to see Parsis in charge of liquor shops wherever he went. He hoped they would lay his advice to heart, and put him at ease so far as boycott of foreign cloth and liquor were concerned.

Young India, 23-4-1925

289. LETTER TO DAHYABHAI M. PATEL

Chaitra Vad 10 [*April 18, 1925*][1]

BHAISHRI DAHYABHAI[2],

Owing to my weak health I have to postpone this time my visit to Dholka. For this I feel ashamed and unhappy. But I have become helpless. By taking rest, I wish to conserve whatever strength I have for the long tour in Bengal. Therefore I hope the men and women of Dholka will excuse me. My resolve to visit Dholka still stands and I shall go there at the first opportunity and satisfy the people. Please on my behalf give them this assurance. Meanwhile I wish everyone to promote the use of charkha and of khaddar, to contribute cotton or its equivalent in money and bear love towards the untouchables.

Vandemataram from
MOHANDAS GANDHI

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2689. Courtesy: D. M. Patel

[1] The letter must have been written before Gandhiji left on his Bengal tour towards the end of April 1925.

[2] A public worker of Dholka taluk in Gujarat

290. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

Saturday [April 18, 1925][1]

LET ANAND[2] HAVE SERVICE FROM US AS LONG AS SHE PLEASES.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 80

291. SPEECH IN REPLY TO MUNICIPAL ADDRESS, JAMBUSAR[3]

April 18, 1925

I am pained to observe that you have been guilty of neglecting *Antyajas*. Where this small but important section of society is neglected, the municipality does not deserve its name. No matter how closely bound we feel with our brethren, we should not go with them even an inch if a principle is involved. You ignored this rule. You forgot it in your eagerness to delude yourself into believing that you had given me an address. You cannot split the life of a man to whom you wish to present an address, by taking into account one side of his life and ignoring another. I have said, not once but many times, that I regard it my first duty to eradicate untouchability. I would not regard myself a true Hindu if I did not talk about this subject day and night. If Hinduism harbours untouchability, the 22 crores of Hindus will perish, which means India will perish. If, therefore, the persons who arranged this address were opposed or indifferent to the movement for the removal of untouchability, they had no right to do what they have done. An address should reflect the real sentiments of the heart. Perhaps there would have been some justification for showering flattery on me if I had been an officer or a chieftain. But I am neither; I am only a *Bhangi*, a *Chamar*, a farmer, and a servant. You can, of course, present an address even to a servant like me, but only if you approve of what is the most important aspect of my service. It is quite true that we cannot win

1 The printed source has given the date as Saturday, 19-4-1925, but Saturday was the 18th.

2 Addressee's mother

3 In Gujarat

swaraj without Hindu-Muslim unity. But what would it matter if they continue to fight with each other? Hinduism is not likely to perish in consequence. After we have done enough of fighting, one day we shall become united. Hinduism is not likely to perish even if khadi and the spinning-wheel are wholly forgotten, though, of course, we shall pay for our folly and starve. But unless the practice of untouchability is rooted out, we shall perish, Hinduism will perish, we shall have to hang our head in shame before the whole world. We shall have to face its challenge and people everywhere will laugh at our preaching a universal religion.

This address you have presented is not an address, but a warning signal. How can you accept a person like me, a *Bhangi*, unless you have given up untouchability? You could have instead told me that you did not agree with my views about untouchability and that, if despite that I came, you would welcome me. You have admitted your lack of progress in regard to khadi; but, then, till you have given up untouchability, can you expect any other result than that progress in khadi should be slow? How can you stop consumption of liquor, either, sitting all the time on the fifth or the sixth storey? Unless you descend to the ground floor, you cannot know anything about the fire raging there.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 26-4-1925

292. SPEECH IN REPLY TO ADDRESS BY LOCAL BOARD, BROACH

April 18, 1925

Prompted by your overwhelming love for me, you have used irrelevant epithets in your address. Whether I deserve them or not is a different matter. It is therefore difficult for me to make a fitting reply. Your duties include cleaning of roads and making provision for the education of children, including the children of *Antyajas*. These are certainly public duties, and of considerable importance though seemingly trivial. But the epithets you have used will not help you in their performance. If, on the contrary, you had said, "Kindly join us and take interest in our work. We approve of your movement for social reform. How good it would have been had you not, willingly or unwillingly, entered politics!", I would have been happy. But I shall

take it that it is implied in your address and will make a short reply.

I was forced by circumstances to enter politics. My friends tell me that I am a misfit in that sphere because I talk of khadi, prohibition, etc., which are remotely connected with politics. But is it likely that I would not know that roads should be in good condition? I can imagine how many people must be abusing the Local Board when they see the roads in a bad condition. You do not have to suffer from the vast quantities of dust as much as it is my lot to suffer. Today, my patience was taxed to the utmost by this nuisance, and I thought on the way that I would say something about this matter. If, however, I say anything, pat will come the reply from you that Government has exhausted the treasury. It would not be proper for you to reply that I should fight and get your treasury filled. You should press the Government hard on the subject. If roads are good, what comfort it would mean for you, me and everyone else! I do not know what sense of responsibility you display in regard to drainage. Besides, the population is predominantly agricultural. Farmers' children should be given such education as would be useful to them in their agricultural avocation. Mere knowledge of letters will not help them. Someone told me once that the education imparted to farmers' children was altogether wasted. It is not the duty of the Minister for Education to think about this aspect of education. He cannot take the initiative in such matters. You should do your best to solve this problem. To the basketful of epithets which you used for me in your address, this is the only proper reply.

[From Gujarati]

Mahadevbhaini Diary, VII, pp. 370-71

293. SPEECH AT PUBLIC MEETING, BROACH

April 18, 1925

Whatever the real reasons for the absence of high spirits and enthusiasm in the country, if people say the fault is wholly mine, for I placed before them a programme which no one could implement, I shall have to plead guilty to the charge. But I had no alternative. If an ailing man calls in a doctor, and suggests various means and remedies, but the patient refuses to employ them, what else can we expect but that the doctor will fail? I am being treated like a doctor to whom the patient clings even after such

failure. You will not employ the means I suggest, you invite me, want to hear me but do not want to carry out my programme —such is the difficult position in which I am placed. Shri Chandulal said that the people here are affectionate. Certainly they are, but what should I do with your love? I wouldn't mind if the people of Broach did not love me; let them only throw yarn at me, even in anger, thinking that I am a crazy man, who should, however, be kept quiet and so they should spin and fling some yarn at me—I shall be satisfied with this. I am always talking about yarn because the money we shall earn through it will go to the walking skeletons in the country. It will not go to the share-holders in Manchester, Bombay and Ahmedabad. They don't need me, the skeletons do. . . . The spinning-wheel is the foundation, the centre of our work for our uplift. We have at present lost our good name and to regain it we should serve the people. This is why I go on touring from place to place, and do not feel ashamed talking about the spinning-wheel anywhere and everywhere nor lose faith in it. On the contrary, my faith becomes stronger day by day. It was with this very aim that I suggested regular spinning as a condition for the right of voting. If people who do not spin do not, therefore, join the Congress, the ship will not sink. It will not matter if only a few thousands, just five or ten, join it. I shall be able to solve the economic problems of the country through them. I can, on the other hand, do nothing through people who have no appreciation of the economic condition of the country, even if there should be crores of them. They can be of no use to me.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 26-4-1925

294. MY NOTES

A Correction

Writing about the wedding of Shri Devchandbhai Parekh's daughter, I said that Shri Trikamlal alone had formed the bridegroom's party.[1] But he informs me that he had gone merely in conformity with the practice in his community, that is, accompanied by twenty-five or more persons. I felt unhappy when I heard this. He also felt sorry to have to correct my error. But whether or not one feels sorry, an error is an error and must be

[1] *Vide* "My Notes", 29-3-1925.

corrected. We cannot create examples by imagining what never happened. Shri Trikamlal need not have taken twenty-five persons with him. But, having already carried out many reforms, he did not have the courage to attempt one more and so took with him such a large party. Even so, he followed one rule very firmly, and that is, that no one in the party accepted even a pie by way of customary gift from the bride's father.

Hardships of "Antyajas"

During the present tour of Kathiawar, I have come to know more about the hardships of *Antyajas*. They cannot get water from wells in the villages. They are permitted to draw it only from troughs meant for cattle and other animals. They complained to me at many places about this. This is, certainly, no small hardship. It is well-nigh impossible to dig separate wells for them in every village. In the hard soil of Kathiawar, where water is struck only at very great depth, digging a well may cost as much as three thousand rupees. In such circumstances, how many new wells can we afford to dig? Everyone has a right to water. To exclude *Antyajas* even from this is the very limit of hatred. If people are afraid of being polluted by contact with them, separate hours for drawing water may be fixed for them. I cannot see any trace of religion in such hard-heartedness.

Evils among "Antyajas"

If I saw more of the cruelty towards *Antyajas* during this tour of Kathiawar, I had also some bitter experience of the evils prevalent among them. While talking with the *Antyajas* of Dhasa, Hadala and Mangrol, I came to know that they eat carrion. They call it 'dust'. When I pressed them to give up this unclean habit, they replied that it was an old practice and was difficult to give up. I tried hard to persuade them, but to no effect. They admitted that the practice should be given up, but pleaded that they did not have the necessary energy and said no more. However earnestly one may plead with Hindus, it will be extremely difficult to remove the general aversion against those who eat rotten meat. Perhaps people may tolerate this unclean habit of the *Antyajas* but they will never mix with them with real love. Whatever the difficulty in the way, the *Antyajas* should make a determined effort to get rid of this habit. They and their sadhus should start a vigorous movement and must end this extremely disgusting practice. One *Antyaja*, while admitting his weakness, was frank enough to tell me that if they were never asked to remove dead

cattle, they would give up eating their flesh. I asked him if *Antyajas* would agree to the Durbar Saheb passing a law forbidding any chamar from removing dead cattle, and he immediately answered they would.

"But, then, how would you live?"

"We shall manage somehow, perhaps take up weaving, but will not come to you with our difficulties."

I knew that it was necessary to study the chamar's profession and remove the drawbacks in it, but I realized this all the more clearly after the above conversation.

Another evil among the *Antyajas* is that *Dheds*, who are weavers, avoid touching chamars and the latter avoid touching *Bhangis*. In this way, the practice of untouchability has spread as between sections of the *Antyajas*. The logical meaning of this is that we should have separate wells, schools, etc., for chamars, *Bhangis* and so on. It is extremely difficult to satisfy all sections among six crores of *Antyajas*. The only way out of this is that we should mix freely among the communities regarded as the lowest among them and, whatever we do to help *Antyajas*, should be for the benefit of these communities and only in places where their needs are likely to be served. Then all distinctions will disappear automatically.

For these evils, it is the so-called high-caste Hindus who are responsible. They kept away from the *Antyajas* completely, and the latter, for want of opportunities of advance, fell very low. In giving them a helping hand, we shall be raising ourselves. Unless one comes down, one cannot raise others. In raising the *Antyajas*, the caste Hindus will be raising themselves.

Model Villages

Chalala, a village at a little distance from Amreli, is in many ways a model village. A meeting was held there in the early morning. The utmost quiet prevailed and the arrangements made were the finest. The people of the village have, with their own unaided efforts, reared trees on the road and so we saw there beautiful *neem* trees such as are rare in those parts. The village has a school which runs very well. *Antyajas* are freely admitted to it. They attended the meeting and sat mixed indistinguishably with the rest of the audience. There is a school for khadi work in Chalala, in which people spin, some more, some less. Very few people were dressed in khadi, but when I appealed to them to take a pledge quite a few hands were raised. The village owed these reforms to four or five persons, and chiefly, as others told me, to the ceaseless efforts of Shri Hargovind, a school teacher, and

Manibehn, his sister. A visitor to Chalala will discover what the sincere and persevering efforts of one or two persons can achieve.

Kathiawar Cotton Fund

I made a real start at Mangrol for contributions to the fund of Rs. 19,200 which I have undertaken to collect. The collections there may be said to be satisfactory. I do not remember the names of all contributors; the total collection, however, came very near to 2,000. I earnestly hope that the collection at Manavdar will not be less. As the work of collecting contributions had not been completed up to the time of our leaving Manavdar, I hope to give the authentic figures of collections at the two places next week. The following are the names of persons who sent in their contributions after reading *Navajivan*.

P. M. Parpiya Rs. 100
Vithaldas Jerajani Rs. 111

I am writing this note while on tour. I have, therefore, mentioned only the sums I have received in the course of my visits to places.

Delicate

There are young men among us who are much too soft in every way, soft in body and soft in mind. Some of these delicate friends have addressed letters to me after reading my article "Is this Non-co-operation?"[1] The substance of their letters is that I have not listened to and tried to understand the non-co-operators' side of the story and have done them injustice. The correspondents believe that my criticism was aimed at them. I do not know against whom it was aimed. I did not have any particular person in mind when writing the article. I merely used letters of criticism from other correspondents and tried to remove some misconceptions. There is not a single sentence in my criticism which can be interpreted to mean that I have credited the statements of those correspondents. When I receive any criticism of a person, and doubts arise in my mind, I generally place my doubts before him and only then do I make any statement. In this particular case, I do not even remember the names, except one. I do not understand how these friends who have written to me thought that the criticism in my altogether objective article fitted them. If they deserve the criticism, they have no reason to feel hurt. If they do not deserve it, they should see that it is not meant for them.

[1] *Vide* pp. 470-2.

These correspondents should not think that this explanation, too, is aimed at them. It is aimed at the softness common among us, at our sensitiveness. Public workers should know that they are certain to be criticized. It is one of the qualities necessary in such workers that they should be able to bear criticism. People who criticize do so with pure motives. There are exceptions, of course; some persons criticize through spite. One should bear even their criticism. My criticism was, and is, about a certain state of mind which is quite common.

The Plague

I had to return through Rajkot at the end of my recent tour of Kathiawar. From friends who met me at the station I heard that the city had been completely deserted because of the plague. I will not discuss at the moment whether it is right for people thus to leave a place out of fear or to remain there and observe the rules of cleanliness and take other suitable measures. This, however, I can say, that it should be quite easy to protect a city like Rajkot against the plague.

But the report which pained me most was that some persons are even afraid of performing the funeral rites of plague victims, and these rites, therefore, have to be attended to by the Seva Samiti or the State. However much one may fear death, one is bound to nurse one's own people. It is one's sacred duty to perform funeral rites. If people thus do not attend even to their ordinary duties, social bonds will lose their force and society will perish altogether.

Cart for Carrying the Dead

In this connection, I recall Bhai Chhotalal Tejpal's suggestion for a cart to carry the dead. He has, in fact, gone crazy over his idea. As I see a panacea in the spinning-wheel, so he sees one in such a cart. We need not, however, pay attention to his habit of exaggeration or to his craziness. We should only consider the valid elements in his argument. He argues that carrying the body of a dead person on shoulders is a hardship, that it requires the attendance of many persons at the funeral and that it is an almost impossible task for the poorest sections in society. He suggests, therefore, that the right thing is to use a cart for carrying a dead body. With this idea, he has actually designed a cart for use in Rajkot and lends it free of charge to the common people. We may leave aside for the moment the question whether on every occasion of death we should carry the body in a

cart. But in situations like an epidemic of the plague, when men are not available in sufficient number and those who carry the bodies run a risk, it is wisdom to use a cart whenever necessary. It has not been laid down that the body of a dead person should always be carried by men on their shoulders. It is only a matter of custom. In places where the cremation ground is at a distance or there is extreme heat or the number of persons to carry the body is very small, the cart can be a great help. The cart designed by Shri Chhotalal can be drawn by men and does not require a horse or any other animal. Just one or two persons can draw it all the way without getting fatigued. I would advise everyone to use this cart wherever necessary.

To Those Who Weave Khadi

The quality of khadi produced in Gujarat has been improving during the last four years. But there is room for further improvement. Its width is much too narrow. As the quality of yarn improves, it should be broader. Our ultimate aim is, and ought to be, that every province should meet its own needs of every variety of khadi.

Spinning-wheel for Relief of Flood-victims

Relief work in aid of those who lost their all in the floods in Malabar is still going on. Some part of the money sent through me for this purpose is being spent for providing help through the spinning-wheel. Since the women there are not familiar with it, they have to be trained in every process. The situation in the Punjab is quite the opposite. There, too, some areas had suffered much destruction. The spinning-wheel has proved a boon to the affected people. At first, they were given doles of flour. Then someone thought of making the people ply the spinning-wheel. There was a spinning-wheel in every house, and the women knew spinning very well. It was decided to pay them wages at more than the prevailing rate. The work is now proceeding well. Had the control been in the hands of a spinning-wheel expert it seems the work would not have had to suffer the losses which it does at present. If the use of khadi becomes universal, it would be very easy to provide relief through the spinning-wheel.

All-India Cow-protection Association

A public meeting will be held in Bombay, at Madhav Bagh, at 8 p.m. on the 28th, for starting this society. Readers of *Navajivan* know the genesis of the idea. I earnestly hope that all those to whom the cause of cow-protection is dear, who regard it as a sacred duty, will attend. The aims of this movement can be

realized only if a large number of voluntary workers take up the cause of cow-protection. One universal feature of Hinduism is its concern for cow-protection. But cow-protection cannot be ensured merely by wishing it; it can be ensured only by applying our mind to the problem and taking suitable measures. There should be, therefore, a public body which will give thought to the problem and plan necessary measures. This meeting is being held with the object of bringing such a body into existence. I hope it will be attended by a large number of voluntary workers in the cause of cow-protection.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 19-4-1925

295. LETTER TO KALYANJI MEHTA

Chaitra Vad 12 [April 20, 1925][1]

BHAI KALYANJI,

Herewith Pragji's[2] letter addressed to Parvati[3] and to me. Send Parvati's reply to me and return my letter, too, so that I can send an acknowledgement to Pragji. If there is anything else to be communicated to Pragji, let me have that also. Are you going to see him?

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Gujarati: G.N. 2675

[1] Pragji Khandubhai Desai referred to in the letter was in jail at this time.
[2] Gandhiji's colleague since South African days
[3] Pragji's wife

296. LETTER TO BRIJKRISHNA CHANDIWALA

Chaitra Krishna 12 [*April 20, 1925*][1]

BHAI BRIJKRISHNA[2],

I have your letter. I liked it very much. I shall write something about Delhi on the strength of the letter. I hope your mind is quite calm.

Blessings from
BAPU

From a photostat of the Hindi: G.N. 2349

297. TELEGRAM[3]

[On or before *April 21*, *1925*]

I HAD MALARIAL FEVER, BUT I AM BETTER NOW. I HOPE TO REACH CALCUTTA[4] ON THE 1ST MAY BY THE NAGPUR MAIL.

The Hindu, 21-4-1925

298. NOTES

VYKOM

The reader will be glad to learn that the Travancore Government have released Sjt. Karur Nambudripad and withdrawn the prohibition order against Sjt. Ramaswamy Naicker. I understand too that the Travancore Government is giving full effect to the agreement arrived at between the Commissioner of Police and myself. I tender my congratulations to the Travancore Government on the admirable spirit with which it is acting in the matter of the long delayed reform. Let me hope that before long the prohibition against the use by 'untouchables' of public roads surrounding temples will be a thing of the past. I

[1] *Vide* "Work in Delhi", 23-4-1925.
[2] Co-worker of Gandhiji; author of *At the Feet of Bapu*
[3] Sent to Calcutta from Sabarmati
[4] In connection with the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpur

need hardly point out to the satyagrahis the absolute necessity of a scrupulous observance of their part of the compact.

BENGAL AGAIN

I am looking forward to the Bengal tour in great hope. Bengal has the finest imagination. The Bengali youth are keen-witted. They are self-sacrificing. Letters received from all over Bengal are most enticing. I wish I had the health to stand the strain that the tour should involve. My Kathiawar tour has given me malarial fever which though brought under subjection has left me very weak. I hope to pick up strength during the nine days that still remain at my disposal. But I ask the organizers to make my daily labour as light as possible. I repeat once more that I would like the whole tour to be thoroughly business-like. Bengal is said to lack business capacity. Let the charge be falsified. When business-like habits are added to a keen and imaginative intellect the combination carries everything before it. May Bengal show the combination. I expect, in every place, full statistical information. If every address, instead of reminding or informing me of my many virtues, were to give a faithful record of the activities of the district or town presenting it, what an education it would be for me? For instance, every address can give me accurate information about the number of self-spinning and other members, the number of spinning-wheels working, the average capacity of each wheel, the counts spun, the monthly output of yarn and khaddar, the number of looms working with hand-spun and other yarn, the number of khaddar depots and the sales in each, etc. The address may also give the number of national schools and colleges with the number of boys and girls attending them. It may add all the information about activity among the untouchables and their condition before and after the commencement of organized work among them. It should describe the Hindu-Muslim condition and finish off with a description of the drink and opium traffic. Even if it be too late to embody all the valuable information in the addresses, it would be well to give me the information on a separate piece of paper. May I also say that it would be wrong to give me costly caskets or frames for the addresses? I should be satisfied with hand-written addresses on handmade paper or on a piece of khaddar. I need not tell Bengal that it may make an address artistic without making it costly or unportable. In Travancore, in several places, the addresses were traced on delicate little palmyra leaves. I want to reach the heart of Bengal as of India.

And where heart is to speak to heart, costly things and even fine phrases are a hindrance rather than a help. I am hungering for deeds not words. Solid khaddar work is dearer to me than heavy gold or silver plate.

More Tales of Woe

The Sikh cup of sorrow is evidently not yet full. Here is a wire from Amritsar:

> Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee has received harrowing details of beating not excluding pulling of beards and *keshas* of members 2nd Shahidi Jatha in Camp Jails Nabha on 16th April. Beating inflicted to exact apologies. Committee has also received some hair and beards pulled out. There are now in Nabha one hundred and fourteen cases of sufferers of this beating. Composition as under: serious seven, contusion of head two, face eight, arm ten, thigh seven, shin eight, private parts eight, back five, minor hurts fifty one. Kindly arrange immediate visit Nabha Camp Jail.

Either the statement is true or it is untrue. If it is true, it calls for an open and impartial inquiry. The Government of India cannot plead neutrality. Their own officer is administering the State. To the Sikh friends I can only say every wrong has a remedy. And this wrong, if the allegations can be sustained, will not long remain without a remedy. As a journalist as well as President of the Congress, I plead my present helplessness to render aid beyond giving publicity and tendering my sympathy, but God willing I shall not remain long helpless. Every wound inflicted on innocence is a wound cut deep into every Congressman and every journalist. And these wounds are winged messengers who carry their own tale to the four corners of the earth, pierce through the heavens and reach the great white Throne of Justice.

Young India, 23-4-1925

299. *NO SIGN YET*

One of the numerous addresses presented to me in the South contains the following remarkable sentence:

> Though you have cried halt at Bardoli, we still cherish the hope that you will, in the near future, lead us to the battlefield, wherein we shall all subdue our differences in our fight for swaraj, with the pure and unsullied weapon of non-violent mass civil disobedience, without which, it is well-nigh impossible to attain swaraj from the hands of an unwilling and greedy nation, whose imperialism is nothing but ruthless exploitation.

There is here a slight disappointment over the Bardoli decision. I know that many thought at the time, and still think, that the Bardoli decision was a political blunder of the first magnitude and showed my utter unfitness for political leadership. In my opinion, however, the Bardoli decision was a great service I rendered to the country. It showed on my part, not lack of political judgment, but abundance of political foresight. The lessons that we have learnt since were well worth learning. If we had then earned a cheap victory, it would have cost us dear, and British Imperialism would have consolidated itself with fresh vigour. Not that it is not consolidated enough now. But the consolidation then would have been far more effective.

Critics may say this is all argument based on probability. And so it is. But for me the probability borders on certainty. Anyway, the Bardoli decision enables me to hope for a day, not far distant, when a fight will become a great probability. Any fight now to be undertaken must be a fight to the finish. But I must freely confess that there is nothing today on the Indian horizon to warrant the hope of early mass civil disobedience. For one thing, there are not enough workers for organizing such a struggle. It requires closer touch with the masses than we have yet shown ourselves capable of. It needs greater, warmer and continuous service of, and identification with the masses than we have yet felt desirous of. We must feel and be one with the masses before we can expect successfully to lead them to a peaceful victory. Indeed when we have arrived at that stage, mass civil disobedience will hardly be necessary. But we must have that confidence in ourselves. Today I, at any rate, have none. Any attempt at the present moment at mass civil disobedience must result in undisci-

plined sporadic violence which will be put down the instant it breaks forth. But civil disobedience does not admit of any violence or countenancing of violence directly or indirectly. The spinning-wheel is undoubtedly designed to bring about that peaceful and calm atmosphere of solemn determination. It is the symbol of social service of the highest order. It is the cement to bind the masses to us national servants. It is a precursor of conscious co-operation on a scale hitherto unknown to the world. If the wheel fails, it means blank despair and starvation for the masses. Nothing can so quickly put the masses on their legs as the spinning-wheel and all it means. It is resistless in its march. It is innocence personified. It adds dignity to the poverty of the masses because it relieves it of its worst features. The wheel is making progress but not rapid enough for our purpose—not even for bringing about exclusion of foreign cloth from the country.

But there is no cause for despair. The wheel will weather many a storm and will come through them all scatheless. And as I have no other means but truth and non-violence for fighting India's battle for freedom, I must swear by it. Though, therefore, mass civil disobedience is practically an impossibility, individual civil disobedience is a possibility at any time. But even that time is not yet. There are too many dark and threatening clouds on the horizon that threaten to overwhelm us from within. The faith of the out-and-out believers in charkha, removal of untouchability and Hindu-Muslim unity has still to be tested to warrant a positive knowledge of who is who.

Young India, 23-4-1925

300. VARNASHRAM AGAIN

A correspondent writes:

> In your recent Madras speech[1] you have re-stated your faith in the four *varnas*. But should the *varnas* be strictly hereditary? Some people think that you favour rigid adherence to the hereditary principle; others that you do not. From a perusal of your writings I am inclined to agree with the former. For instance, what else does your dictum, that the 'untouchables should be classed with Shudras' and that they should enjoy all the rights of non-Brahmins, indicate? Why this constant reiteration of the old arbitrary distinction between Brahmin and non-Brahmin as

[1] *Vide* "Speech at Public Meeting, Madras", 22-3-1925.

if the two belonged to biologically different species? If an untouchable can become a non-Brahmin, can he not also become a Brahmin in this very life? Again, if it is possible for an untouchable to become a Shudra, how is it impossible for a Shudra to become a Vaisya, for a Vaisya to become a Kshatriya or for a Kshatriya to become a Brahmin in this very life? Why do you hurl the Law of Karma in the face of those who believe it to be possible? Is there a better Brahmin than Sree Narayana Guru Swami, the *Ezhava*? I know no better Brahmin than Gandhiji, the Bania. I know also of hundreds of other 'non-Brahmins' who are better Brahmins (in the best sense of that term) than most birth-Brahmins.

If you did not favour strict application of the principle of heredity, you would not seek to prohibit intermarriages between people of the same race professing the same religion and following the same customs as are several members of the three *Dwija*[1] castes. Nor would you so strenuously oppose inter-dining between, say, vegetarian Brahmins and vegetarian non-Brahmins.

Of course, heredity is a great law of life, but there are even greater laws controlling its mysterious processes. One of them is the law of variation in the phraseology of Evolutionary Biology. Heredity is the *static* and variation is the *dynamic* principle of the universe. The latter it is that holds the key to what we call 'Progress' for want of a better name. No social system can ignore the law of heredity with impunity; neither can a social system ignore the law of variation except at its peril. The history of the caste system in India affords enough proof of this. It proves above all that the worst form in which the law of heredity can be applied in any social organization is to create a *hereditary clergy* to be the sole custodians of its intellectual and spiritual affairs and trustees in perpetuity of its religion.

Even Babu Bhagwan Das, than whom there is no more orthodox Brahmin and who has done some hard thinking on the subject of social reconstruction in India, conceded some years ago that the hereditary principle in Varnashrama Dharma must be considerably relaxed. It would be, indeed, strange if you of all men championed rigid adherence to it. As a great many people do not know what exactly you think of it all, I hope it will be possible for you to publish this letter with your reply in your esteemed journal.

I fancy that I have answered all the arguments advanced by the correspondent against *Varnashram.* But evidently readers have short memories or only those who are concerned for the moment

[1] Literally twice-born—the term refers to the ceremony of investiture with *Upanayana* (sacred thread) which was denied to the Sudras but considered obligatory for the Brahmins, Vaisyas and Kshatriyas.

read what is written for them. Thus, for instance, I have often shown the distinction between *Varnashram* and untouchability. I have defended the one as a rational scientific fact and condemned the other as an excrescence, an unmitigated evil. It may be that my denseness sees a distinction where none exists. It may be, too, that I see science where there is ignorance or superstition. But I do regard *Varnashram* as a healthy division of work based on birth. The present ideas of caste are a perversion of the original. There is no question with me of superiority or inferiority. It is purely a question of duty. I have indeed stated that *varna* is based on birth. But I have also said that it is possible for a Shudra, for instance, to become a Vaisya. But in order to perform the *duty* of a Vaisya he does not need the label of a Vaisya. Swami Narayan Guru does not need to be called a Brahmin in order to enable him to be, what he is reported to be, a Sanskrit scholar. He who performs the duty of a Brahmin will easily become one in the next incarnation. But a translation from one *varna* to another in the present incarnation must result in a great deal of fraud. The natural consequence must be the obliteration [of] *varna*. I have seen no reason to justify its destruction. It may be a hindrance to material ambition. I must be excused from applying material considerations to an institution that is based on religious considerations.

Nor is the correspondent happy in his analogy. I have asked that a *Panchama* should be regarded as a Shudra because I hold that there is no warrant for belief in a fifth caste. A *Panchama* does the work of a Shudra and he is, therefore naturally classified as such when he ceases to be regarded as a *Panchama*. I do believe that this constant confusion between untouchability and *Varnashram* and attack on the latter in the same breath as the former retards the progress of reform regarding untouchability.

It is now clear that the law of variation is left untouched by *Varnashram*. Nay it is provided for. Only, types do not vary in a few years or even in a few generations. There is no fundamental difference between a Brahmin and a Pariah, but he who runs may see that class considered, there is a marked and noticeable difference between Brahmins and Pariahs or for that matter all the four castes. What I would like my correspondent to join me in is a fight against an arrogant assumption of superiority whether it is assumed by Brahmins or others. It is the abuse of *Varnashram* that should be combated, not the thing itself.

Young India, 23-4-1925

301. WORK IN DELHI

A Delhi correspondent writes saying that during the Satyagraha Week[1] some workers decided to hawk khaddar. They approached the task in fear and trembling, for they were not sure of response from divided Delhi. To their agreeable surprise, however, the hawking and the *bhajans* that accompanied it, took effect. All the common folk bought khaddar with pleasure and the volunteer hawkers had no difficulty in disposing of their stock from day to day. This experience has a lesson of its own. The general body of people are still sound, if the facts given by my correspondent are facts. I have no reason whatsoever to doubt their accuracy. Will the Congress workers try to enlist members more systematically and with more confidence than hitherto? Nothing can be a greater tribute to Hakim Saheb than that in his absence Delhi has come up to her former level.

Young India, 23-4-1925

302. PRIZES FOR SPINNERS

I gladly make room for the following from Meerut:[2]

Young India, 23-4-1925

303. KHADDAR IN ANDHRA

I have said in my previous writings that the khaddar movement is slowly but surely penetrating the villages. I take the following extracts[3] from the Nellore District Khadi Board Report:

Spinners should note the care the Nellore women are bestowing on the slivers. Good carding and good slivers are half the battle.

The following[4] from Ongole makes equally interesting reading:

[1] The National Week which was observed from April 6 to 13

[2] Not reproduced here. The report mentioned the names of prize-winners at a spinning competition held at the Navchandi Fair.

[3] & [4] Not reproduced here

The foregoing is merely an extract from a detailed report of work in the five villages selected by the Company.[1] The output during the period under review[2] was 18,522 yards and the sales, Rs. 13,452-12-1.

Young India, 23-4-1925

304. LETTER TO ABBAS TYABJI

TITHAL,
April 23, 1925

MY DEAR BHUR-R-R,

Yes, I had five days' go at fever but I am all right now. I am a bit weak yet. I came to Tithal this morning to have five days' cool air. On 28th I reach Bombay which I leave on 29th for Bengal for five weeks' tour. Yes I heard about the incident from Vallabhbhai. These incidents will happen in life. It is an eternal duel between Hyde and Jekyll.

With love to you all,

Yours,
M. K. GANDHI

From a photostat: S.N. 9552

305. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

TITHAL,
Vaishakh Sud 1 [April 23, 1925][3]

CHI. VASUMATI[4],

I have your postcard. The weather here is of course fine. How nice it would be if you were here. If I had to stay here longer, I would certainly have sent for you. But my stay is for four days only. Even so, I would advise you to come and stay here, in case you do not go to Hajira. The weather is pretty cool and the water is considered to be good.

Blessings from
BAPU

[1] For khaddar production and sale business

[2] July to December 1924

[3] The postmark bears the date "24 April 25".

[4] An inmate of the Sabarmati Ashram; daughter-in-law of Navalram Pandya, a well-known litterateur of Gujarat

[PS.]

I shall reach Bombay on the 28th and leave for Calcutta on the 29th. My address there is : 148 Russa Road, Calcutta.

CHI. VASUMATI DHIMATRAM
KELAPITH
SURAT

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 461. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

306. LETTER TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

TITHAL,
Vaishakh Sud 1 [April 23, 1925][1]

I hope Anand is calm. If she has any fear of death, let her rid herself of it.

[From Gujarati]
Bapuni Prasadi, p. 80

307. LETTER TO MAGANLAL GANDHI

Vaishakh Sud 1 [April 23, 1925][2]

CHI. MAGANLAL,

Chi. Chhotelal is not likely to have peace here. He wishes immediately to return to the Ashram. He says he is ready to do as you wish. But he wants to have some work all the time. I feel that Chi. Chhotelal should be put either on carding or on weaving. Let him card or spin the whole day. We do need such workers also. Under the arrangement Chi. Chhotelal will not have to come frequently into contact with others and will be able to remain at peace. Nevertheless, if you can think of any other work more suitable for him, you may certainly give him that.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 6093. Courtesy: Radhabehn Choudhri

1 As in the printed source, except that the date has been corrected to tally with the *tithi*

2 The letter has on it the words "Ashram file" with the date 27-4-1925, evidently the date of receipt.

308. LETTER TO C. F. ANDREWS

April 25, 1925

MY DEAREST CHARLIE,

I have horribly neglected my correspondents including you. Most precious letters have remained unanswered. But I have been perfectly helpless. I have been moving from place to place at break-neck speed. And I am recuperating for four days at Tithal in anticipation of the Bengal ordeal[1]. That enables me to overtake at least a part of the heap of correspondence lying in my bundle.

Salutation of the national flag is in my opinion unobjectionable. I see nothing inherently wrong about it. A national spirit is necessary for national existence. A flag is a material aid to the development of such a spirit.

Military training in universities is, I think, inevitable. I do not think India will tolerate compuslion. I do not anticipate, at least in our generation, a complete cessation of the warlike spirit, i.e., even to the extent of banishing punishment of robbers and raiders. All I am aiming at is non-violence in regaining national freedom and possibly cessation of war as between nations as a natural or necessary corollary. Beyond that I have not the confidence to preach.

About birth-control, I should like to study the Holland figures and conditions. But even supposing that they are all that they are claimed to be, the posers I have suggested remain unanswered. The inevitable result of admitting that indulgence is a virtue or a necessity loosening of the marriage bond is a matter of course or the ideas about marriage must be so revised as to banish chastity from all consideration [*sic*]. And I have heard protagonists of birth-control arguing against regarding chastity as a virtue. And personally, if I were to admit that indulgence is a virtue, I do not see how we can escape the natural deduction that free love is also a virtue. That is my difficulty. I never knew that birth-control by artificial means had so seized the imagination of the Indian youths.

[1] The forthcoming tour of Bengal in connection with the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpur

I hope to meet you at Faridpur.
With love,

Yours,
MOHAN

[PS.]

I have your wire. I did have a mild attack of malaria. But it was nothing. I had thirty grains of quinine after the attack. There is no cause for anxiety. I have replied by wire. Love.

MOHAN

From a photostat: G.N. 964

309. LETTER TO JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

April 25, 1925

MY DEAR JAWAHARLAL,

I am in Tithal, a place somewhat like Juhu, resting for four days to fit myself for the Bengal ordeal. I am trying here to overtake my correspondence in which I find your letter referring to the article "God and Congress"[1]. I sympathize with you in your difficulties. True religion being the greatest thing in life and in the world, it has been exploited the most. And those who have seen the exploiters and the exploitation and missed the reality naturally get disgusted with the thing itself. But religion is, after all, a matter for each individual, and then too a matter of the heart, call it then by whatever name you like, that which gives one the greatest solace in the midst of the severest fire is God. Anyway, you are on the right track. I do not mind reason being the sole test even though it often bewilders one and lands one in errors that border on superstition. Cow-protection to me is infinitely more than mere protection of the cow. The cow is merely a type for all that lives. Cow-protection means protection of the weak, the helpless, the dumb and the deaf. Man becomes then not the lord and master of all creation but he is its servant. The cow to me is a sermon on pity. As yet we are merely playing at cow-protection. But we shall soon have to grapple with the reality.

I hope you have received all my previous letters. I have a doleful letter from Mr. Satyapal[2]. I wish you could go to the

[1] *Vide* pp. 222-5.

[2] A medical practitioner and Congress leader of the Punjab

Punjab even if it is only for a few days. Your visit will hearten him. I wish Father would have two months in a quiet and cool place. And why will you not go to Almora for a week or so and combine work with a breath of cool air?

Yours,
BAPU

A Bunch of Old Letters, p. 42

310. ROADS IN GUJARAT

The control of Local Boards is gradually passing into the hands of Congressmen. People should get the benefit of this. They can get it in two ways, through improvement of roads and children's education. I can claim to have travelled a great deal on Gujarat's roads. I have travelled on almost all the roads in the districts of Kaira, Broach, Surat, the Panch Mahals and Ahmedabad. All of them can be described as more or less unsatisfactory. They are dusty beyond description. Villages have practically no roads. This is a great hardship both to human beings and cattle. I have heard the complaint that Local Boards lack funds, and there may even be considerable substance in the complaint. I have not studied the problem how to raise funds. But those whose duty it is to make and maintain roads should resign if they are without the necessary resources or cannot raise them.

The same is true about education. We must strike out a new path in education. Farmers' children should generally attend schools in villages. They are not going to become, should not become, clerks. Their education, therefore, should centre round their agricultural work. So long as children's education is not related to their surroundings, it will not have full or beneficial results on society. A country without a sea coast can derive no benefit from naval education, which means that such education would be a waste of effort; much the same is true about the present education of our children. If, however, city children's education is wasted, it is chiefly the cities whose interests will suffer, but the education of the children of crores of farmers wasted will mean total ruin for the whole country. Crores of children cannot become clerks; if they are also rendered unfit for agriculture, who will attend to it? This, therefore, is a problem of great importance for the Local Boards.

[From Gujarati]
Navajivan, 26-4-1925

311. MY NOTES

BURDEN ON ME

A Kathiawari friend writes:[1]

I see nothing but delusion behind this suggestion. I don't think that many people will, if I give away yarn spun by me, take to spinning or do it with greater devotion. All the same, if this friend is right in what he thinks, I am ready to spin more for the sake of other workers. It is quite easy for me to spare a few bundles of yarn for gifts. But only those who spin regularly will get them. My own wish, however, is that people should spin for the sake of spinning. I can see no advantage in their spinning provided they get yarn spun by me. The right thing is that people should realize the duty of spinning and do it.

"WITH SUFFERING HEART"

A friend from Kathiawar writes:[2]

How can I believe that a person who gives money cheerfully and with a smile on his face and persuades others to give it, does so with suffering heart? How did the correspondent come to read the hearts of all such persons? How is the merchant-class being deceived? Is it ever likely to be deceived? If not from this class, from which other class can we get or collect money? If we cannot improve the economic condition of the country with the help of traders, through whose help can we hope to improve it? Upright traders admit that conditions have deteriorated because of their class, and that is why some of them give away money as some sort of atonement. The experiment, moreover, of distributing khadi among the poor is still to be carried out. How, then, can anyone argue that the money collected does not pass on to them? I am convinced that the persons who are in control of the Conference are unselfish men, and I believe that the fund will be managed by them, or under their supervision, with care and honesty. They will do nothing wrong, at any rate deliberately. The question in the letter, "If that is the aim, can

[1] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had suggested that Gandhiji should present yarn spun by himself to khadi-workers with whose work he was satisfied. This, he had argued, would inspire greater devotion in them and would help in popularizing khadi.

[2] The letter is not translated here. The correspondent had said that people who contributed to the fund which he was collecting did so very unwillingly.

those who claim to serve draw Rs. 75 a month?" is irrelevant to the other question whether or not the money is being distributed among the poor. Is it not surprising, the salaried men should administer funds to the tune of lakhs? I do not know, moreover, whether those who claim to serve get Rs. 75 a month, or any other sum, though I know that some workers get this amount. Why grudge them that? All workers are not rich. Persons who give their whole time to public service are entitled to accept payment. The only questions which can be asked are: Whether the payment a worker receives represents his needs; whether the needs of an ordinary person amount to what the worker gets; how much he would earn elsewhere; and, finally, whether he is honest and whether the public needs his services. If the answers to these questions are satisfactory, the public worker commits no crime in taking Rs. 75 a month. The people will require thousands of workers, and all of them cannot be honorary.

"INDUCEMENT"

The same friend further writes:[1]

In the first place, the word "inducement" was used with innocent intention. I see nothing wrong in inducing the poor to wear khadi by supplying them slivers at low cost. I am a salesman of swaraj. I am a devotee of khadi. It is my duty to induce people, by every honest means, to wear khadi. This, according to me, will help us in securing swaraj. Have the authorities done wrong in countries where people are given "bounties" for promoting the sale of certain articles? Germany offered large bounties to help the consumption of her sugar in all countries, and she derived nothing but profit from the practice. New industries in our country should be helped either by the government or by the people. I do not believe that the help which the people are giving to khadi is anything very big. What is being done is but a beginning. The results are bound to be beneficial. There is nothing wrong in selling khadi at less than the cost price. We do not have a large stock of it now. We need to produce khadi worth not lakhs but crores. The question, "What about the interests of traders in khadi" is certainly pertinent. But we do not have even as many such traders as can be counted on the fingers of a hand. Finally, it is not likely that the Conference itself will organize the sale of khadi. The

[1] The remarks are not translated here. The correspondent had asked Gandhiji whether he was right in suggesting in his speech that people should be offered inducement to wear khadi.

time when this can happen has not yet come. Under the scheme adopted by the Conference, only those who spin will benefit and the question, therefore, about the interests of traders does not arise.

No Spinning-wheel

The friend writes further:[1]

I do not believe that work in the khadi centres is being done in a mercenary spirit. The Manager of the Amreli Centre makes no profit for himself but, on the contrary, invests his own and his friends' money in it. In Wadhwan, the organizers have been working purely in a spirit of selfless service. There are allegations about Madhada. The Secretary has been asked to go there and examine the accounts thoroughly. Shri Shivji has agreed to a complete scrutiny of his accounts. I will certainly publish the results of the examination. There are, of course, people who refuse to accept a spinning-wheel even when offered at half the cost price. The only remedy for such scepticism is for the faithful to strengthen their faith. If faith remains unshaken, scepticism will disappear. Faith is like the sun, and lack of it like the night. When the sun rises, the night must disappear. The fact that well-to-do families do not agree to have a spinning-wheel in their homes is itself our real misfortune. It only means absence of the spirit of *yajna*. The spinning-wheel is a means of learning sefless labour. What better form of *yajna*, of service, can I then suggest for young men and women? Many other forms of service may be undertaken along with it, or in addition to it, but it is the foundation.

Shri Jayakar's Spinning-wheel

In this connection, the reader will be pleased to know that Barrister Jayakar has started spinning regularly. He has sent me the second instalment of yarn spun by him, and has asked for a good spinning-wheel. The one he has at present is altogether unsatisfactory, but even on that he has been spinning regularly. I compliment Shri Jayakar. May he ever remain firm in his resolution.

Bent Spindle

While talking with the pupils of a school, I discovered that they were quite eager to ply the spinning-wheel, but that the spindle frequently got bent. I asked the teacher if he did not know how to straighten it. His reply was frank: "I know spin-

[1] The remarks are not translated here. He had alleged that people had no genuine interest in the spinning-wheel.

ning, but I do not know how to set right defects in a spinning-wheel; in any case, I do not know how to straighten a spindle." Personally, I believe that every teacher in a national school should be an expert in the techinque of the spinning-wheel. We cannot engage a special teacher in every school to look after the spinning-wheel. If, therefore, we really want to see the spinning-wheel being plied in every national school, we should encourage the teachers to learn its technique. This means learning to make and fix the belt, to examine the condition of washers and make new ones of leather or some other material, to fix a tape on and straighten the spindle. He is no carpenter who does not know how to keep his tools in good condition; likewise, he is no spinner who cannot discover and repair the defects in his spinning-wheel. One who does not know the science of the spinning-wheel and having no practical experience of it should no longer be considered fit to be a teacher. Anyone who cares to can learn this thing in a short time and with very little effort.

Unwashed Clothes

During my recent tour of Gujarat, I observed a large number of pupils in the national schools. Many of them were untidy and dirty in appearance. Some of them wore caps which were so soiled with perspiration and stank so badly that it was difficult to touch them. The garments which some of the children wore were also strange to look at. Some had too many clothes on them for this time of the year. Some wore trousers, but had not taken care to button them properly. Some wore clothes which were torn. I think that, as children suffering from contagious diseases are forbidden to attend school, so also children whose clothes or bodies are dirty or who are wearing torn clothes should be forbidden to attend. If it is asked when and where, in that case, the children will learn to be tidy, the reply is simple. A child which comes to the school in such condition should first be taken to the tap and washed there; it should be made to wash its clothes with its own hands and should be provided with other garments from the school while its own are drying. When they have dried, it may change into them, then wash the garments provided by the school, dry them and return them properly folded. If it is feared that this will mean increase in the school's expenditure, the child should be given a note and sent home, and may be permitted to attend when it returns in a clean condition. Physical cleanliness and tidiness should be the first lesson. Even if it is difficult to make a rule requiring all children to attend

school in a uniform, it certainly cannot be tolerated if they attend dressed in any kind or condition of clothes.

What has been said about clean clothes also holds good about drill. Children must know how to walk, sit down and stand up, and march thousands together. One child sits stooping, and another with legs jutting out; one is yawning and stretching its limbs in boredom, while another is crying. How, then, can we expect that they will be able to march in step? Children should be taught how to do this right in their early years. They will look smart, raise the prestige of the school and will feel a new kind of energy in them. Moreover, children who have been taught drill can be taken from one place to another thousands at a time, without difficulty and without any kind of commotion. I can call to mind one or two schools in which 900 pupils came together, noiselessly, within three minutes of a whistle and, when the programme was over, they returned to their classes in the same number of minutes, and were back at work as if they had never left them.

With regard to dress, according to me shorts or a dhoti, a shirt and a cap, all of khadi, should suffice. When especially they are washed, thousands of children in this dress are a beautiful sight to see. Many children wear, in addition, a jacket or a half-coat and attract attention in the midst of the others. They should be saved from this miserable condition.

I know that cleanliness, tidiness, drill, etc., do not exhaust a child's education. The child should, in addition, develop strength of character, and have knowledge of the letters. But we cannot neglect a single aspect of children's education. We should attend to all three aspects—physical, mental and spiritual. Whichever of these three is neglected will be a cause of suffering to the child when it grows up into a man and he will realize and regret the deficiency. Not only this, the neglect will have a very unhappy effect on society too. Even today, we are suffering the consequences of the deficiences in our education. There is such lack of cleanliness among us that we are unable to root out diseases like the plague. It has become almost impossible to have clean surroundings in cities. We do not know even the fundamentals of civic life, and those who know them do not observe them in practice.

A "Rishikul"[1]

The *Acharya*[2] of a certain *Rishikul* does not believe in untouchability, but he fears that if he does not observe the practice in his

[1] A type of residential educational institution, generally run by Arya Samajists
[2] The head

institution the latter will close down for want of support and, so, though he knows untouchability to be an evil, he harbours it. In my humble view, it is better that *Rishikuls* in which this is likely to happen should not be started at all or, if already established, should close down. How can anyone, knowing that untouchability is a sin, still cling to it in order to run a *Rishikul*? Where in an institution there is such divergence between precept and practice of the *Acharya* himself, how can it help having a bad effect on the pupils? How good it would be if teachers who are not ready to practise what they preach give up the teaching profession and earn their living in some other way? Our experience, however, is that very often persons who are fit for nothing else become teachers.

[From Gujarati]

Navajivan, 26-4-1925

312. LETTER TO VASUMATI PANDIT

TITHAL,
Vaishakh Sud 3 [April 26, 1925][1]

CHI. VASUMATI,

I have your letter. Mahadev must have met you by the time. He has told me nothing. But from your talk about your business, I had understood something. Now, your letter makes everything clear. Don't be in the least perturbed, whatever happens to the business. As for money, you have some today and you may have nothing tomorrow. You have given away plenty of money; now if time takes away what you have, why worry? He who has may give it and he may also lose it. Your place is always secure with me. Because of the strength of your character, you have become my daughter. Character is a thing that another can neither confer nor take away. I wish you therefore to be fearless and free from worry. Consult me whenever you want to. If you have to do so when I am away or Mahadev too is away, do not hesitate to write to either of us. And you can always consult Devdas[2]. He is sensible and can give correct advice. You should not hesitate to write anything to me.

Take good care of your health. You may come to Bombay if you find it necessary while I am there. This letter should

[1] Gandhiji was at Tithal from 23rd to 27th,

[2] Youngest son of Gandhiji

reach you tomorrow, Monday. I am in Bombay on Tuesday and Wednesday. I shall go to Bombay by the passenger train.

Blessings from
BAPU

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 546. Courtesy: Vasumati Pandit

313. TELEGRAM TO MATHURADAS TRIKUMJI

[April 27, 1925][1]

MOTHER'S PASSING AWAY GOOD. MERITED RELIEF.

[From Gujarati]

Bapuni Prasadi, p. 80

314. LETTER TO FULCHAND SHAH

BULSAR,
Vaishakh Sud 4, [April 27, 1925][2]

BHAI FULCHAND,

Someone in Amreli has complained that there are stones in the cotton sent out from there; and they are probably included in the weight.

There cotton is quickly sold away; you will therefore see to it that it is secured immediately and no mischief is done.

Hope your mother is well.

Blessings from
BAPU

[PS.]

I am in Bombay on the 28th and 29th. After that Calcutta.

From the Gujarati original: C.W. 2827. Courtesy: Shardabehn Shah

[1] As in the printed source. The original telegram in English is not available.

[2] The postmark bears this date.

315. INTERVIEW TO ASSOCIATED PRESS OF INDIA

BOMBAY,
April 28, 1925

His attention being drawn to the objection to the spinning franchise raised in certain quarters on the ground that it seriously interfered with the representative character of the Congress which was slowly drifting into a body representing only a few hundreds of spinners, Mahatma Gandhi said:

About the spinning franchise I retain the same opinion which I held at Belgaum. While it is perfectly true that numerically the Congress has suffered, the masses are still behind it. But as I have said in the pages of *Young India*,[1] if the members do not like the franchise, it is for them to alter it, however much I may deplore such an alteration.

Asked if he thought Dr. Annie Besant's scheme of Commonwealth of India Bill[2] worthy of being discussed at a Round Table Conference of all parties including Swarajists, Mahatma Gandhi said:

I have promised to study the Bill and give Dr. Besant my opinion upon it. Anything from her must command a respectful hearing. Whether today the people are in a mood to consider any swaraj scheme or not is a different question . . . .

Asked about his health, Mahatmaji said that he was better than what he was at Ahmedabad. It was not true that he was not attending the Bengal Provincial Conference for reasons of health. "Well I am quite fit to go to Bengal," said the Mahatma with a smile.

The Bombay Chronicle, 29-4-1925

[1] *Vide* "My Position", 16-4-1925.

[2] Mrs. Besant's Bill which was published early in January 1925, contained the following proposals:

1. Classification of units of administration into a fivefold grade—from the village to the Central Government.
2. Definition of the qualifications of voters.
3. A declaration of Fundamental Rights.
4. Viceroy's control as King's representative over military forces and foreign relations until the Indian Parliament assumed control.
5. Previous approval of the Viceroy before the Central Legislature took any step concerning the Indian States.

The scheme was finally adopted at the Cawnpore Convention, early in April, under the chairmanship of Sir T. B. Sapru; *vide India in 1924-25*, p. 341.

316. SPEECH AT ALL-INDIA COW-PROTECTION CONFERENCE, BOMBAY

April 28, 1925

In presenting for approval the draft constitution of the All-India Cow-Protection Association[1] to the public meeting held at Madhav Bag, Bombay, on the 28th April, Mr. Gandhi made a speech in Gujarati, of which the following is a summary:

I do not think that I have in my life approached any undertaking with the fear and trembling that I experience today. I am regarded as a man who is generally not afraid of taking risks. I have interested myself in cow-protection, almost ever since my childhood, and have given a careful study to the subject during the past thirty years. I have also occasionally written and spoken about it. And yet I have not felt myself equal to the present undertaking, nor do I feel today. Not that I do not know the way to do it. I do know it. But the successful carrying out takes more than an intellectual understanding of the ways and means. It requires deeper purification and I would have fain added to my modest stock of it before I launched on this new undertaking. But Fates decide my undertakings for me. I never go to seek them. They come to me almost in spite of me. That has been my lot all my life long, in South Africa as well as ever since my return to India. I had not dreamt that the task of forming an All-India Cow-Protection Association would fall to me, when I consented to preside over the Cow-Protection Conference at Belgaum. But those in charge of it had formulated big plans, and as President I had to consider them. We had a meeting of the committee appointed thereto at Delhi, where a draft constitution was prepared and approved by all present there, including men like Pandit Malaviyaji, Lala Lajpat Rai, Swami Shraddhanandji and Dr. Moonje. Even then I was marking time. I waited and watched, before I could decide on taking the final step. But the ever active Chaunde Maharaj would not leave me in peace. I then proposed that we should get the whole constitution approved and accepted at a public meeting of all interested in cow-protection. This meeting then which should have been held in Delhi is held here tonight, more for my convenience than anything else.

[1] *Vide* "Draft Constitution of All-India Cow-Protection Sabha", 24-1-1925.

The task for which I want your approval and in which I seek your help is immense. It is bigger than perhaps the struggle for swaraj inasmuch as it is of an entirely religious character. In my work of a prominently political character, I have often erred and blundered, I have done penance and repaired those errors and blunders. But in the present undertaking an error would be well-nigh irretrievable for the simple reason that the cow we propose to serve is a dumb creature, she cannot complain, she has no voice to raise against what may be against her interests. An untouchable may cry and raise a protest, a Hindu or a Mussalman may raise a protest and even break heads to settle a grievance. But the cow is entirely at our mercy. She consents to be led to slaughter, and to be embarked for Australia and gives her progeny to carry whatever burden we want it to carry, in sun or rain. The task is thus immense and I have undertaken it out of a pure sense of duty.

But I may warn that there are limits to my capacity for undertakings. There are certain limits which are obvious. For instance though I can collect funds for my purposes, and though I know that the love of my countrymen for me is deep enough to find me money for any good undertaking that I take up, I want you to know that I cannot go about from place to place asking for money for the present task. I have not the time nor the energy for it. Then there is the honest, careful and efficient disposal of the funds. I obviously cannot look to or supervise every detail, and the cow won't impale you on her horns for mismanagement or similar blunders. We have, therefore, to do the work in fear of God and with the full consciousness of the sacredness of the task.

I gave at Belgaum[1] my meaning of cow-protection. It includes, as I explained, the protection and service of "both man and bird and beast". It presupposes a thorough eschewal of violence. A Hindu, if he is a true Hindu, may not raise his hand against a Mussalman or an Englishman to protect the cow. I have, for our present purposes, confined myself to considering the ways and means of protecting the cow merely. For I know that if we once succeed in the protection of the cow proper, we shall some day be able to serve the cow in all creation. And if we succeed in Bombay, we shall also thereafter succeed elsewhere.

But to do so we have to bring both our reason and our heart to bear on the task. We shall have to examine ourselves

[1] *Vide* Vol. XXV, pp. 515-22.

and realize that it is primarily a Hindu's duty in the matter that this Association seeks to be fulfilled, we have to realize that we have not so much to save the cow from the butcher's knife as from our own. And, for that purpose, we shall have to grasp the economics of the thing. Nowhere in the world is the proportion of the bovine to the human population so small as in India. Nowhere is the cow so feeble, and her yield so little as in India. Nowhere is she so badly treated as she is today in India by the Hindus. I am saying this not to excite you. I am stating the barest truth, without the slightest exaggeration. It is the Hindus, therefore, who have to fulfil their obligations in the matter. The Mussalmans will do their duty after we have done what is obviously ours. I gave all the help that I could for the Khilafat, because I wanted to enlist the Mussalman's sympathy in the matter of cow-protection. But let us fulfil our obligations first. We are doing nothing today. The little work that is being done by Chaunde Maharaj and others is as a mere drop in the ocean.

Two things I want to invite your attention to as important in the constitution, viz., the establishment of tanneries and dairies. That is too practical, too earthly you will say. But religion which takes no count of practical affairs and does not help to solve them, is no religion. That is what the life of the Ascetic King Janaka teaches us. And that is why I am putting a religious matter before you in a practical form.

We shall have to take control of the milk supply and also of the disposal of dead cattle. You are perhaps shocked as I speak of hides and tanneries. But do you know that because we would not take charge of them the untouchable who does the work today excuses himself for eating carrion and remaining unclean? Let us show him the proper way of doing things and he will reform his ways. I am suggesting all these things with the fullest consciousness of the meaning of all that I say. I may tell you that it was I who vowed never more to take cow's or buffalo's milk when I learnt for the first time in South Africa the cruel way in which the last drop of milk was drawn out of them. I know that there are beef-eaters amongst Vaishnavas, I know that there are Vaishnavas who do not hesitate to take Liebeg's "Extract of Beef", on the pretext that it is prescribed by the doctor. Should we then hesitate to control tanneries in a religious spirit? I tell you we have come to this state because we would not take care of disabled and dead cattle and because we exported them to America.

Let us, therefore, establish tanneries and look to the proper disposal of dead cattle. Let us establish dairies and ensure a

cheaper and better supply of milk. I will not hesitate to seek co-operation of the government in this matter, for I know they have got the services of good dairy experts. If we do these two things then alone is it possible to stop the avoidable slaughter of thousands of cattle annually. The other things in the constitution are of a non-controversial character and explain themselves.

We now want a treasurer and a secretary for our work. The treasurer should be such as everyone trusts, as can collect the necessary funds, and can find them himself when they are not forthcoming. The secretary's first qualification is that he should be a *brahmachari* if possible,—not a mere celebate but a truly religious *brahmachari* who has control over all the senses. He should then have a fair knowledge of the vernaculars and a knowledge of English. He should be an energetic and an active man, for, he would have to go about from place to place and meet different people. Failing a *brahmachari*, even a *grihastha* of high character will do. I hope you will approach the task in the proper spirit and I pray that God may give us the strength and the sacrifice needed for it.

Young India, 7-5-1925

317. INTERVIEW TO A PRESS REPRESENTATIVE

BOMBAY,
[*April 29, 1925*][1]

"I know nothing whatsoever about it", declared Mahatma Gandhi, when interviewed by a Press representative, before he left for Bengal, with regard to the statement appearing in *The Madras Mail* that, at the Bengal Provincial Conference, he and Mr. Das would finally abandon non-co-operation and state the terms on which they were prepared to co-operate with the Government.

Mahatmaji declared that there was no exchange of correspondence between Mr. Das and himself on the subject, and that he was visiting Bengal with the sole purpose of fulfilling a long-standing promise.

The Hindu, 30-4-1925

[1] Gandhiji left Bombay for Bengal on this date.

318. INTERVIEW TO "NEW INDIA"

BOMBAY,
April 29, 1925

Interviewed by *New India's* special correspondent on the Commonwealth of India Bill, Gandhiji said:

I wish I had the time to study Dr. Besant's Commonwealth of India Bill with the care and attention that it demands. But such study as I have been able to give it has led me to the following conclusion: The recognition of the King-Emperor as Sovereign and Protector of the Commonweath seems to have been assumed as an indispensable conditon. I do not subscribe to it.

I recognize that in any Bill passed by mutual consent, some such provision is necessary, but I could not teach the people that the British connection is an inviolable thing. There should be some provision in the Bill for the immediate participation by Parliament in the defence of the Commonwealth. All the existing financial and other obligations of the Government of India seem to have been taken over under the Bill. I cannot be a party to such a transaction. The moral justice of every commitment and contract of the existing Government should be examined by an impartial Commission, consisting say, of a nominee of the President and a nominee of the British Crown, the two to choose an umpire. The jurisdiction of the Privy Council should be abolished. A local one should be established and the principle of compulsory arbitration in every civil suit should be laid down. The right of the Commonwealth to impose a protective tariff upon all goods, whether British or other, should be clearly recognized, subject to most-favoured nation treatment to Great Britain. Hindi or Hindustani should be the language of the State. The qualification of voters and members of the legislative bodies is too complicated for me. I dislike the graded franchise. The franchise for the villages is too broad. A lunatic, for instance, may be a voter. There is no provision anywhere for labour. My formula is, no labour, no vote; hence the spinning franchise.

Subject to the foregoing amendments and to the co-operation of Mussalmans, I should subscribe to the Bill. My own opinion is that we have not the requisite atmosphere for considering the measure. I could not undertake to convene an All-Parties' Conference, even if the Bill undergoes the changes submitted by me,

but I should gladly attend any Conference convened for the purpose. The more I study the present situation, the more convinced I feel that my function is to work for power from within. Mr. Jamnadas Dwarkadas[1] tells me that the draft before me is not the final draft, and that another is in course of preparation which will include most or at least some of my suggestions. This final draft, I understand, is to be in terms of the conclusions arrived at recently at Cawnpore. I need hardly state that Dr. Besant's is one of the few schemes now before the public, and as such, deserves careful study by every lover of India. That swaraj is a necessity of national life goes without saying. Any step, therefore, that brings us nearer to it is a welcome effort. Lastly, I cannot help placing on record my opinion that the Bill is most comprehensive and has been drawn with extraordinary care. In some repects, it is quite original.

(The final draft was discussed and passed at Cawnpore and is now in the press, and will be sent to Gandhiji. But I do not think that it can be said to embody his suggestions, as they are very unusual and were not before the Convention. —Annie Besant).

New India, 29-4-1925

319. NOTES

Worthy of Emulation

A teacher of a national school in Bardoli taluk writes to say that he picked during the past four months seven maunds of cotton pods, ginned them and carded the cotton thus ginned and spun eighteen pounds of yarn in weight and 3 lakhs of yards in length. It is a great achievement to have continued the quantity of yarn spun for four months, and this in addition to the work of teaching. The teacher tells me that he is going not only to continue the quantity but to do better during the rest of the year. What this industry means is better illustrated by a report that reaches me from an Amreli worker. He reports the following sentiments expressed by a sixty-year-old dame who had walked four miles to take her share of slivers for spinning:

> You people have conferred a great boon upon us. We have had three successive lean years. We were without any work. And how could one live without work? Now I have got work and I shall be happy.

[1] Home Rule leader and a member of the All-Party Conference Committee's sub-committee on Hindu-Muslim unity

The teacher was not without work. He had no need to do the strenuous labour he imposed upon himself. But his example will in the end prove infectious and others who are idling away their time will be engaged in this wealth-producing and necessary national industry. The old dame's, however, is a typical instance. There are tens of thousands of men and women who are famishing for want of work. Many, as in Orissa, have passed the working stage and with them idleness has become a habit. There is no other remedy save hand-spinning for dealing with calamity and introducing happiness into millions of homes in this country.

Have I Property?

Among the many curious inquiries I receive, here are some from a correspondent in Guntur District:

> People say Gandhiji does not do what he says. He preaches poverty but possesses property. He wants others to become poor, but he is not poor. He advocates simple and inexpensive life yet his is expensive. So answer the questions below. Do you take anything from the A.I.C.C. or Gujarat Congress Committee for your living and touring expenses? If so, what is the amount? If not, how are you meeting the expenses for your long tours and your food and clothing, if you are, as people take you to be, a propertyless man?

There is much more in the letter of the same kind but I have taken out the most salient points.

I do make the claim that I attempt to act as I preach. But I must confess that I am not as inexpensive in my wants, as I would like to be. My food since my illness costs more than it should. By no means can I call it a poor man's food. My travels too cost more than they did before my illness. I am no longer able to travel long distances third class. Nor do I travel, as I did before, without a companion. All this means not simplicity and poverty, but the reverse of it. I draw nothing from the A.I.C.C. or the Gujarat Committee. But friends find my travelling expenses including food and clothing. Often during my tours, railway tickets are purchased by those who invite me and my host everywhere covers me with kind attention which often embarrasses me. People present me during my tours with much more khaddar than I need. The balance goes to clothe those who need it or it is put in the general khaddar stock of the Ashram which is conducted in the public interest. I own no property and yet I feel that I am perhaps the richest man in the world. For, I have never been in want either for myself or for my public con-

cerns. God has always and invariably responded in time. I can recall several occasions when almost the last penny had been spent for my public activities. Monies then came in from the most unexpected quarters. These responses have made me humble and filled me with a faith in God and His goodness that will stand the strain of utter distress if it ever becomes my lot in life. It is open to the world, therefore, to laugh at my dispossessing myself of all property. For me the dispossession has been a positive gain. I would like people to compete with me in my contentment. It is the richest treasure I own. Hence, it is perhaps right to say that though I preach poverty, I am a rich man!

Hindi and English

A Tamil lawyer suggests that I should print *Young India* with Hindi translation in parallel columns so as to enable the Tamilian to learn Hindi without difficulty. I appreciate the motive but I am sorry. I cannot adopt the suggestion. *Young India* has a definite mission. Through its medium I seek to popularize the ideals I try to represent among that large body of men and women who do not understand either Gujarati or Hindi, but who understand English. I must not extend the scope of the paper. But for Tamilians who would understand Hindi, and it is high time they did, I recommend the Hindi Prachar office in Triplicane, Madras. This institution publishes, too, a journal which is printed in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu and English. The sole function of the institution is to spread a knowledge of Hindi among those in the South who are patriotic enough to wish to learn it. The enthusiast, if he likes, can also avail himself of the *Hindi Navajivan* which contains translations of the main articles and notes in *Young India* and *Navajivan*.

For Biharis

My forthcoming visit to Bengal has raised lively expectations in Bihar and correspondents have already asked me to include their places in my Bihar tour. Instead of sending them individual replies I venture to inform them hereby that no date for the Bihar tour has as yet been fixed. If my health keeps after the Bengal tour (I say this because I have not yet regained my former vitality after the recent attack of malaria), I shall endeavour to suit the Bihar friends. But no date can be fixed before the Bengal tour has well advanced. In any case, my Bihar friends who want me to visit their places should correspond with Rajendra Babu,

He will be in charge of the programme on the same conditions as to days of quiet, etc., that I have urged for Bengal.

TRANSVAAL INDIANS

Here is a cable from the Secretary, British Indian Association, Johannesburg:

> Mr. Collins, opposition member Ermelo, introduced in the Assembly a bill prohibiting the grant or renewal of trading or business licences within six miles Transvaal municipal or township area to any Asiatic wherein he is not owner of fixed property, also to any Asiatic company corporate or otherwise. Bill if passed will grossly violate Smuts-Gandhi agreement respecting vested rights and spell total annihilation and final extermination of Indians. Association emphatically protests against its passage and urges you adopt means for its withdrawal. H.E. the Viceroy has been cabled.

The cable was received sometime ago but owing to my incessant travelling it has remained unattended to till now. I offer my apologies to the Association. The matter, however, is not stale nor beyond help. This measure is after the style of what General Hertzog introduced and which General Smuts so energetically opposed. In appealing to me, the Association has relied on a broken reed. I can but give publicity to the grievance and hope that the appeal to the Viceroy will not prove fruitless. His Excellency can at least vindicate the position of Indian settlers overseas if he can do nothing else. The proposed Bill is a manifest breach of the Smuts-Gandhi agreement of 1914. It is dishonest to mention Asiatic owners of fixed property in the Transvaal, for it is known to everyone that they cannot become owners of fixed property except in Locations and that they are denied the right of owning fixed property even in Locations. Everyone knows, moreover, that to confine Asiatic trade to Locations is to kill that trade. If extermination of the Asiatic is the goal, the honest course would be to bring in an expatriation bill and challenge the Indian Government to do its worst.

WHERE IS IT?

A correspondent writes:

> In your issue of the 12th instant there is a Mussalman's complaint about some mosque at "Lohani". This name does not occur at all in the Indian Post Office Directory for British India as well as the States. So it would be advisable for the guidance of workers as well as for verification of complaints, if you made a point while publishing names of small

places in such connections, of giving their P.O.s or at least the districts to which they belong. Does Lohani exist at all?

I asked the complainant about the location of Lohani. He refers me to the Delhi Khilafat Committee. I have written to it. But to save time, I seek information from all concerned. I must confess my own ignorance of Lohani.

Young India, 30-4-1925

320. *QUANTITY* v. *QUALITY*

There is at the present moment a note of despondency in the air over the number of Congress members. The complaint is that the members have been never so few as today. The complaint would be reasonable if the franchise being the same, the response was less than before. It would also be reasonable if the influence of the Congress was to be measured by the number of members. Opinions would undoubtedly differ as to the measure to be applied for gauging the Congress influence. For me there is one measure. I attach the highest importance to quality irrespective almost of quantity, the more so for Indian conditions. In the midst of suspicion, discord, antagonistic interests, superstition, fear, distrust and the like, there is not only no safety in numbers but there may be even danger in them. Who does not know how often numbers have embarrassed us during the past four years? Numbers become irresistible when they act as one man under exact discipline. They are a self-destroying force when each pulls his own way or when no one knows which way to pull.

I am convinced that there is safety in fewness so long as we have not evolved cohesion, exactness and intelligent co-operation and responsiveness. One virtuous son is better than one hundred loafers. Five Pandavas[1] were more than a match for one hundred Kauravas[2]. A disciplined army of a few hundred picked men has times without number routed countless undisciplined hordes. A few members fully satisfying the Congress test can give a good account of themselves, whereas one million members nominally on the Congress register may not be worth the register itself. I do not for one moment suggest that those whom we have now on the register are sound or even sounder than those

[1] Five brothers, heroes of the *Mahabharata*

[2] Cousins of the Pandavas

whom we had before. That can only be verified at the end of the year.

What I would like to drive home is that we should know what we want. Do we believe in the paramount value of the spinning-wheel? Then we must adopt it whether we are few or many. Do we believe in the necessity, in terms of swaraj, of removing the curse of untouchability? Then we may not surrender, though we may be overwhelmed. Do we regard Hindu-Muslim unity as absolutely necessary for the attainment of swaraj? Then we must stake much to achieve it. We may not be satisfied with a sham. We must have the real coin or none.

"But these are not politics. There is no giving battle to the Government in all this", say some friends. My answer is we cannot give effective battle to the Government till we achieve these things. "But we shall never achieve any single one of these things till we attain swaraj", say others. I answer that we must evolve the ability to achieve these things notwithstanding Government indifference or opposition, secret or open. Achievement of these things to me means half the battle, if not the whole of it.

"What then of the Swarajist programme?", say they. That programme must go on side by side with the development of internal strength. The Swarajists are an integral part of the Congress. They are able, they are on the alert, they will shape their policy in accordance with the exigencies of the situation. Let those who have the aptitude prosecute that programme as well. But let them not forget the internal work. If twelve thousand men and women, nay, two thousand men and women, can be induced vigorously to work the constructive programme, things will immediately wear a different aspect. Throughout my wanderings, I have noticed a lamentable dearth of workers—brave, honest, self-sacrificing, self-reliant and with confidence in themselves and the mission. The harvest is indeed rich but the labourers are few.

Sjt. Srinivasa Aiyengar and I were attending a meeting in Madras. People were bubbling with enthusiasm. We were driving to keep time for another meeting. But my 'admirers' insisted on exhibiting me through a street which was not on the programme. He pleaded, I pleaded, want of time. Sjt. Aiyengar pleaded on behalf of my health. It was all to no purpose. We were driven! —shall I say compulsorily? Both of us realized that these men were no help to the cause, they were a positive hindrance. Things were set right only when I took the law in my hands, declined to be driven, actually got out of the car and defied the crowd to carry me bodily if they wished. Here there was an ocular de-

monstration of danger in numbers. I can cite a score of such experiences. The people are well-meaning but ignorant and thoughtless. How many well-meaning mothers drug their children to death?

We want not excitement at the present moment but calm constructive work. It is a laborious task, it is stupendous. But it is not beyond our capacity. It need not even take time. What hinders progress is indefiniteness. The verbal assent without practical performance embarrasses. I plead for quality and quality alone. I must, therefore, refuse to trouble the All-India Congress Committee unless I receive a requisition to summon it. The present programme has been framed to arrive at the requisite quality. And so long as it remains, I can but advise every Congress worker to put his or her whole soul into its working so that we might have, at the end of the year, if it is at all possible, a compact body of men and women possessing the requisite qulifications, be the number ever so small.

Young India, 30-4-1925

321. TO P. N. P. (TRIVANDRUM)

You are wholly wrong. My remarks about Christian drinking were based upon the information given by Christians and at their instance. If the information was not correct, I am glad. Your mistake and your sorrow are due to your separating yourself from the other Indians. Why may you not think with me that if a Christian Indian or a Mussalman Indian or a Hindu Indian drinks or otherwise falls, it is as much your shame as it is mine? All of us are members of the same body and if one member suffers the whole body suffers.

Young India, 30-4-1925

322. TO 'REVOLUTIONARY IN THE MAKING'

You will pardon me for not reproducing your letter. I would have gladly published it, if it was a presentable letter—not that the language of your letter is at all in bad taste or violent. On the contrary, you have attempted to present your case fairly and calmly, but the argument is loosely and unconvincingly put. What you want to say is that the revolutionary does no violence because when he takes the life of his adversary, he does so to benefit him, i.e., his soul, even as a surgeon performs a painful operation on a patient for his (the latter's) good. You argue that the adversary has a vile body which vitiates the soul and that the sooner it is destroyed, the better for him.

Now, the analogy of the surgeon is wrong because he is concerned merely with the body. He operates on the body to benefit the body. His science ignores the soul. Who can say how many bodies have been repaired by surgeons at the expense of the soul? But the revolutionary destroys the body for the supposed benefit of the adversary's soul. In the first instance, I do not know a single revolutionary who has ever thought of the adversary's soul. His single aim has been to benefit the country even though the adversary may perish, body and soul. In the second instance, since you believe in the Law of Karma, a compulsory destruction of a body merely paves the way for the creation of a tougher body for the same soul. For, the man whose body is destroyed will weave for himself a body after his own longing. That, to my mind, is the meaning of the persistence of evil and the crimes we see about us. The more we punish, the more persistent crimes become. They may change colour, but the substance is the same. The way to serve the adversary's soul is to appeal to the soul. It defies destruction, but it is amenable to appeals tuned to the required pitch. Souls must react upon souls. And since non-violence is essentially a quality of the soul, the only effective appeal to the soul must lie through non-violence. And do we not arrogate to ourselves infallibility when we seek to punish our adversaries? Let us remember that they regard us to be as harmful to society as we regard them. It is idle to drag in the name of Krishna. Either we believe him to be the very God or we do not. If we do, we impute to him omniscience and omnipotence. Such a one can surely destroy. But we are puny mortals ever erring and ever revising our views and opinions. We may not

without coming to grief ape Krishna, the inspirer of the *Gita*. You should remember too that the so-called Christians of the Middle Ages thought exactly as you believe revolutionaries think. They burnt heretics for the benefit of the latter's souls. We of today laugh at the atrocious folly of these ignorant so-called Christians of the Middle Ages. We now know that the inquisitors were wrong, their victims were totally innocent.

I am glad you are turning the wheel. Its silent revolution will bring you peace and bring the freedom you love much nearer than you imagine. Do not mind your fickle friends who have deserted you leaving behind a legacy of "bug-ridden bed born" slivers. If I were you, I would re-card these slivers. You may not know carding. If you do not, you must go to the nearest man who knows it and learn the beautiful art of carding. He is an indifferent spinner who knows not how to card. You need not be afraid that the method of non-violence is a slow long-drawn-out process. It is the swiftest the world has seen, for it is the surest. You will see that it will overtake the revolutionaries whom you imagine I have misjudged. To point out errors is not to misjudge. I am devoting so much space to them because I want their exhaustless energy to be directed in the right channel.

Young India, 30-4-1925

323. INTER-DINING AGAIN

A correspondent writes:

> You have answered[1] at length an Englishman's 'puzzle' on the question of intermarriage. But what about inter-dining which is a much less vital affair but more frequent in life? Suppose some men of goodwill organize, as one means of promoting goodwill amongst all classes, an inter-caste, inter-communal and inter-national dinner on purely vegetarian and non-alcoholic lines; would you from your own *sanatan* point of view object, if any Hindus—say, some members of your caste or of your own family—wished to join that dinner on invitation (and not, of course, on compulsion!) and asked your opinion on it? Similarly, may a Brahmin with *your* view of the *sanatan* (or *maryada*) dharma accept a clean dish of rice and a pure cup of water which a *chandal* or a Mussalman or a Christian has offered him (and not, of course, forced on him), finding the Brahmin wayworn, hungry and thirsty (and almost on the point of

[1] *Vide* "Notes", 12-3-1925, sub-title, "A Politician".

fainting, let us say) in a lone wild place? In fine, the question is: Does such a demonstration of goodwill as the "cosmopolitan" dinner or the offer of a dish by a supposed untouchable to a touchable Hindu and acceptance thereof square with your idea of the *sanatan* or *varnashram dharma* or *maryada dharma*[1] or does it not?

If a Brahmin is in distress he would take, if he wishes to hold on to his body, clean food by whomsoever offered. I would neither object to nor advocate participation in an international or cosmopolitan dinner, for the simple reason that such functions do not necessarily promote friendship or goodwill. It is possible today to organize a dinner party between Hindus and Mussalmans but I dare to say that such a dinner will no more bring the two communities together than the absence of it keeps them apart. I have known deadly enemies dine and chat together heartily and yet remain enemies. Where will the correspondent draw the line? Why does he stop at vegetarian and non-alcoholic meals? A man who regards flesh-eating a virtue and wine bibbing a harmless and pleasurable refreshment, will see nothing but promotion of goodwill in dividing with the world his beefsteak and exchanging with it the sparkling cup! On the argument underlying the correspondent's query, there can be no dividing line. I, therefore, rule out inter-dining as the means of promoting goodwill. Whilst I do not myself observe these restrictions and take food that I do not regard as forbidden at the hands of anyone so long as it is cleanly dressed, I respect the scruples of those who observe the restrictions. Nor do I pat myself on the back for my "liberal" practice as against the others' "narrowness". I may be narrow and selfish in spite of my apparently liberal practice and my friend may be liberal and unselfish notwithstanding his apparently narrow practice. Merit or demerit lies in the motive. Insistence upon inter-dining as part of the programme of promotion of fellowship, in my opinion, retards the growth of goodwill by raising false issues and even false hope. What I am trying to remove is the idea of pollution and superiority. These self-imposed restrictions have a sanitary as also a spiritual value. But non-observance no more dooms a man to perdition than its observance raises him to the seventh heaven. A man who observes the dining restrictions in a most punctilious manner may be a veritable blackguard fit to be shunned by society, and a cosmo-

[1] Path of knowledge and conduct prescribed by the Shastras

politan omnivorous man may be one ever walking in the fear of God whose society it would be a privilege to cultivate.

Young India, 30-4-1925

324. IS THERE GOD?

TO

THE EDITOR, *Young India*

SIR,

With reference to your article "God and Congress" I beg to say that while the Charvak school was materialistic out and out, Buddhism is silent on and Jainism doubts the existence of *Ishvara* or any supernatural Entity that may be said to correspond to God, although both faiths believe in the transmigration of the soul and the Law of Karma, in common with Hinduism. (Your friend Prof. Dharmanand Kosambi whom I mentioned may be consulted on this point.) Buddha with Karma, and Jina with Karma, respectively, may be said to take the place of God in the ritual practice of those two religions.

Of modern religious movements, the Deva Samaj of the Punjab which is mostly a humanitarian and social-service body and lays great store by ahimsa is (I believe) frankly atheistic in its creed, but *not* materialistic. I have read that it believes neither in God nor gods. In the light of this, its name of *Deva*[1] Samaj appears rather paradoxical. *Lucus a non-lucendo*![2]

Of Bradlaugh you say that his denial of God was a denial of Him as He was known to Bradlaugh to have been described. Was this denial inclusive, or was it exclusive, of that "certain unmistakable sameness" behind all that variety of definitions which there would be if we could all give our own definitions of God, as you say? I presume, it cannot be the latter, for Bradlaugh was learned and observant enough. If the former is the case, what made Bradlaugh deny the existence of God even in the aspect of that "unmistakable sameness"?

I doubt not but that the following excerpt will be of some interest to you in this connection:

The very idea of a god, as creating or in any way ruling the world, is utterly absent in the Buddhist system. God is not so much as denied; he is simply not known. Contrary to the opinion once confidently and generally held, that a nation of atheists never existed, it is no longer to

[1] God

[2] The grove (*lucus*) is so named from its not shining (*lucendo*).

be disputed that the numerous Buddhist nations are essentially atheist; for they know no beings with greater supernatural power than any man is supposed capable of attaining to by virtue, austerity, and science; and a remarkable indication of this startling fact is to be seen in the circumstance, that some at least of the Buddhist nations—the Chinese, Mongols, and Tibetans—have no word in their languages to express the notion of God. The future condition of the Buddhist, then, is not assigned him by the Ruler of the universe; the "Karma" of his actions determines it by a sort of virtue inherent in the nature of things—by the blind and unconscious concatenation of cause and effect."

—*Chamber's Encyclopaedia, sub.* Buddhism.

Let me conclude with a *shloka ;*

नमस्यामो देवान् ननु हतविधेस्तेऽपि वशगाः
विधिर्वन्द्यः सोऽपि प्रतिनियतकर्मैकफलदः ।
फलं कर्मायत्तं किममरगणैः किं च विधिना
नमस्तत्कर्मभ्यो विधिरपि न येभ्यः प्रभवति ॥

भर्तृहरिः, नीतिशतके ।

To the gods or angels we our homage pay;
But to sorry Fate subject e'en them we find;
Then, is our worship due to Fate?
Sure *he* yields but the fruit our actions rate.
And the fruit on actions of our own depends;
—Hence small account of gods or angels or of Fate.
Then hail, our actions small or great!
Over whom not even Fate prevails!

—My own attempt at a free rendering of the above from Bhartrihari —*Nitishataka.*

I am, etc.,
S. D. NADKARNI

Karwar (N. Kanara)
10th March, 1925.

I cannot refuse space to Mr. Nadkarni's clever letter. I must, however, adhere to my opinion that neither Jainism nor Buddhism are atheistic. I present Mr. Nadkarni with these definitions of God: The sum total of Karma is God. That which impels man to do the right is God. The sum total of all that lives is God. That which makes man the mere plaything of fate is God. That which sustained Bradlaugh throughout all his trials was God. He is the Denial of the atheist.

Young India, 30-4-1925

325. "SEEKER AFTER TRUTH"

One who describes himself a seeker after truth sends me his own reflections arising out of my discussion of revolutionary views. He tells me that at first he was a non-co-operator, then, he began to think that non-co-operation was merely a social movement and that the revolutionary was the only true political movement. At Belgaum again, he began to think anew. I condense below his reflections without in any way whatsoever changing the sense or his language:

The Revolutionary is certainly patriotic. He is a Hero. He is prepared to give up his life in the cause of the Motherland. But his very aim is wrong.

What is it the Revolutionary wants? Freedom for the country. So far quite right. Why is the freedom required? So that the people may be happy. This also is right. How can the people be happy? By changing the system of Government.

Now here comes the real point.

Let us just consider our state. We Indians have ever so many virtues. But what of our weaknesses? We have become cowards. We have taken to several vices. Amongst the Hindus we have the untouchables. We till the ground and produce grains, vegetables and such things which could very easily feed us all. All the same, the fact remains that the major portion of us are half-starving. We all weave and work in mills. Still we are but half-clad. We have got enough clay. We know how to make bricks and build beautiful houses. Still there are several of us who have no other place than beneath trees to live.

No doubt the foreigners are, to a very large extent, to blame for our difficulties. Wrong though it may be, that is our sincere opinion. But what of our own share of the responsibility? Are we not at all to blame?

Or suppose that we, with the help of the revolvers or such things, do drive away the enemies? Is it not possible for any other foreigner to occupy the position of the present foreigner? After all warfare is but a sort of gambling.

I do not propose to deal with the utility or otherwise of non-violence, maintaining armies and such things. I consider myself absolutely incompetent to discuss this subject. Suffice it to say that I am beginning to understand Gandhiji's views on this subject and his views appear to me to be right.

The United States of America, it is generally said, have a very good Government. What of the several plots, the several murders, dacoities, swindlings, etc., that take place there? The Bolshevik system is considered to be good. Why then the daily increasing capital punishment, riots and such things? Any number of such examples can be given.

To dispose of Gandhiji's ideas as merely idealistic and impracticable is wrong; much more so for a revolutionary to do so. For he has really the welfare of the people at heart.

It is not impossible to bring about a situation where the world will be an abode of happiness. The best thing, of course, is to do good to others. But at present you need not even go so far. Do good to your own self.

Don't you waste a good portion of your time? Don't you send out crores of your rupees to other countries by purchasing their cotton goods? Spin and make good use of your time. Weave your own cloth and use the same and save your crores.

This spinning, I take it, does not merely mean spinning of cotton yarn. I take it to mean home industry. It is a solution as much for any other country as for India.

Removal of untouchability, Hindu-Muslim unity and such things are internal. It is self-purification. Everyone has his own dirt to wash. The Hindus have the untouchability, the Indians, the Hindu-Muslim rupture. It is thus for every country to wash itself of its own curse.

The revolutionary will thus see that he has more useful work in spreading this wonderful cure of the world-illness. He serves not only himself and his countrymen, but he serves the whole world.

When you have purified yourself, and when you have become self-sufficient how on earth can anyone levy tax or collect by any other means money from you without your co-operation? It is impossible to govern without the co-operation of the governed. Now we, the governed, are not pure, we are not self-sufficient. But we will soon become such. This is the real meaning of non-violent non-co-operation. Fear none but your conscience. Why do you hide and throw bombs on the foreigner? Come out and tell him boldly that we hold him to a large extent responsible for our weaknesses, fear not if he sends you to jail. Tell him also that you propose as much to change him as your own self. Thus you will be doing good both to your own self and to the person whom you now consider to be your enemy.

Young India, 30-4-1925

326. SPEECH AT NAGPUR

April 30, 1925

Amidst the thundering cries of "*Mahatma Gandhi ki jai*" the train conveying Mahatma Gandhi *en route* to Calcutta arrived here at exactly 9.25 a.m. . . . Mahatmaji was led to the dais by Sikh volunteers with naked swords in hands. After requesting the audience to remain quiet Mahatmaji delivered a small speech. He said that though he was very glad to see them there, his heart burned within himself to find very few clad in pure khaddar. So long as they did not put on khaddar and all classes of people such as Sikhs, Parsis, Hindus, Mahomedans and others were not firmly united, and so long as the curse of untouchability was not removed, swaraj was impossible. He appealed to the people of Nagpur to bring about real Hindu-Muslim unity and take to spinning. After this speech Mahatmaji was presented by the Secretary, City Congress Committee, with the report of the work done in the city. Mahatmaji left Nagpur at about 10.

The Bombay Chronicle, 1-5-1925

327. ILLUMINATING DOCUMENTS

[April 30, 1925][1]

These notes are being written during the trying journey to Calcutta. This being my first passage through the Central Provinces after my discharge from prison, people are embarrassingly attentive at every station and there is no rest for the wearied limbs. The discarding of khaddar is most noticeable. Instead of a forest of white khaddar caps, I see everywhere the provoking black foreign caps on almost every head. A friend sadly remarked to me that there was hardly one in a thousand who wore khaddar habitually. I am witnessing all along the route a striking demonstration of the fact. All honour then to the one per thousand who remain faithful to khaddar against heavy odds. My faith in khaddar rises as I find this indifference to if not revolt against khaddar.

The demonstration of the painful truth became complete at Nagpur—the centre that re-affirmed the Calcutta resolution of

[1] From the reference to the "journey to Calcutta", the article appears to have been written on April 30 after the halt at Nagpur. Gandhiji reached Calcutta on the morning of May 1.

non-violent non-co-operation. There was a vast crowd at the station. The Congress officials had even arranged a meeting just outside the station. The hot sun was beating overhead. The din was terrific. Nobody heard anybody, much less listened to anybody. There were volunteers but there was no discipline. No way was kept for me to pass through. I insisted on a way being made if I was to go to the meeting place during the half hour that the train was to stop at the station. The way was made with difficulty. I waded through it in the best manner I could. took me over five minutes to reach the platform. Without the crowd pressing from all sides, I could have reached it in half a minute. I took no more than one minute to deliver my message. It took me longer to return to the train than it took to reach the platform, for the crowd had now lost its head completely. The intoxication of affection was now at its height. The shouts of "————*ki jai*" rent the sky. I was ill able to bear the din and the dust and the suffocation. "O God! deliver me from this affection" was the silent prayer that went up to the Great White Throne. I reached the train in safety. It was provokingly late going. I stood in the doorway wishing and hoping to talk to the crowd if it would keep still for a while. The Congress officials tried, a big Akali tried, to silence the crowd. It was no use. It had come to have *darshan*. That it was having with delirious joy. Its joy was my pain. My name on the lips and black caps on the heads,—what a terrible contrast! What a lie! I could not fight the battle of swaraj with that crowd. And yet, I know that Maulana Shaukat Ali would say there was hope so long as there was that affection, blind though it was. I am not so sure and therefore I was in agony.

At last, I got a hearing. I demanded the black caps. The response was instantaneous but not generous. From that vast crowd I do not think more than one hundred caps were thrown, four of which were thrown not by the owners. They were claimed and promptly returned. This sight had a double lesson for me. With proper organized work, people could be induced to discard foreign or mill-made cloth. That was one lesson; but there was another. People there were who were yet ready to remove the neighbour's cap, just the preliminary to coercion. But there should be no coercion in khaddar wearing or in anything else. Those who wear it must do so voluntarily or not at all.

But the most illuminating information was given to me by the documents that the business-like officials had prepared for presentation to me. The documents tell me a truthful, simple,

unvarnished story of Congress work. One paper contains information about Provincial Congress Committee activities. In March last, it had a membership of 204 of which 114 were self-spinners and 90 gave yarn spun by others. In April, the membership fell to 132, self-spinners being 80 and the others 52. Thus there was a big drop among both the classes in one month. What it will now be remains to be seen. The Committee reports 4 national schools in the province and donation of Rs. 5,000 from the trustees of the late Harishanker Vyas for untouchables. A sub-committee has been appointed to draft a scheme for the uplift of the untouchables. The paper mentions that, thanks to the effort of Pandit Motilal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the Hindus and Muslims "have been maintaining very peaceful relations with one another".

The second paper is a summary report of Congress activities in the city of Nagpur. It states that in the August of 1924 there were 1,133 members. In March 1925 the figures were:

A	B	Total
37	70	107

In April they were:

A	B	Total
29	30	59

In one month the defaulters were 48.

Number of spinning-wheels working is "about" 40. The average output of yarn is 60 to 70 thousand yards per month. Average counts are 10 to 14. No looms work with hand-spun yarn.

There is one khaddar shop with an average sale of Rs. 500 per month.

The report says "no information can be given about drink and opium" and then, this extraordinarily brief and truthful statement ends thus:

> The above-given figures in Congress membrship fairly show the future of the spinning franchise. The self-spinning members come mostly from the No-change section of the Congress. The B class members are mainly from the Swaraj Party. Not a single Swarajist is a self-spinner. Out of the five members from this Nagar who hold seats on the A.I.C.C., only one is a self-spinner; one has regularly paid his quota of purchased yarn; two are defaulters and one has even failed to pay his quota for March and is no longer a member of the Congress. Some of those who hold seats on the P.C.C. are also found to be in defaulters' list and some of them hold responsible positions in the P. C. C. This will show how far the franchise is workable. The No-change section, which has faith in

spinning and khaddar, is gradually weakening and is, at present, limited to individuals. The Swarajists of Nagpur are anxious to throw off the franchise and so is the Centrist or the Independent party which at present holds the P.C.C.

A ray of hope: Generally, people (common people) look with love and respect at those who spin regularly and who have sacrificed their careers for the Congress work.

Some of the causes of the slack work:

(a) Want of organization in the workers who have faith in the franchise.

(b) Want of sympathy in big Congress leaders for the franchise and infirmness of the originator of the franchise to maintain it against all odds. Even the workers in the No-change Party have come to believe that the franchise is going to be repealed at the next session of the Congress and this has taken away all the enthusiasm in them for any patient and effective work.

Anti-propaganda: Most of the Congress and public speakers lay greater stress on other matters and point out the weak points about the franchise and scrupulously avoid saying anything in its favour. And this cannot be counteracted for fear of creating controversy which is sure to lead to unhealthy atmosphere and in which no support can be expected from Mahatma Gandhi.

I note the gentle rebuke administered to me for my "infirmness to maintain it (the spinning franchise) against all odds". But let me tell the authors of the report that I will maintain it against all odds for myself. But, if I have a spark of the democratic spirit in me, I cannot maintain it for the Congress. That must be left to the Congress members. The responsibility must be joint and several. Why should those who believe in the franchise, i.e., in hand-spinning, for the nation, not maintain it all the more when others are lukewarm? And supposing that the Congress next year alters the franchise, what will the believers do? Will they leave off spinning? Or are they going to spin for themselves and vicariously for others also?

The authors of the report are right when they say that I would lend no support to controversy that is "sure to lead to unhealthy atmosphere". But if anyone is lukewarm, the way to counteract the lukewarmness is not to talk about or against it but to go one's way and organize what one believes in. Who can prevent those who believe in spinning from organizing it? Let me inform the authors of the report that there have sprung up in the country silent workers who are spreading the message of the wheel effectively and unostentatiously.

There are still two more documents for me to refer to among the batch that was handed to me at Nagpur. The third is the report on Tilak Vidyalaya. This institution started with 1,000 students and over 40 teachers in 1921. This grand number fell to 150 in 1923-24. In July 1924, it was reduced to 55. Now it is 45 with 8 teachers. Spinning had been dropped. It has now been re-introduced. Carpentry, book-binding, tailoring, etc. are taught in this institution. The total monthly expenses are Rs. 355. The income is Rs. 180, including fees. They had a windfall in the shape of a legacy of Rs. 5,000 from the estate of the late Harishanker Vyas of Betul.

The Vidyalaya is said to give religious instruction and physical training.

They need Rs. 1,000 as capital for their technical department and Rs. 10,000 to enable them to run the school for six years.

The story of the fate of this Vidyalaya is about the story of almost every other national school in the country. Disheartening as the story may appear in the reading, there is no occasion to lose heart. If the teachers are determined, competent and self-sacrificing, they can make their small institutions effective and useful from the national standpoint. Numbers are valueless if they do not satisfy the required test, whatever it may be. If the teachers of the Nagpur Tilak Vidyalaya have grit in them and can satisfy the Congress test, I do not think they will have difficulty in finding financial support. I know of no institution that has died for want of financial backing. I know many that have died for want of the requisite quality among the teachers.

I have reserved the most hopeful document to the last. It is a list of those who spun yarn for presentation to me apart from their quota for membership. The list has 41 names of which two are institutions. Therefore, there were more than 41 individual spinners. I find in the list Maharashtrians and Marwaris. I find also four Parsis, one Muslim and four ladies. The list gives the yards and the weight and the counts spun against every name. The length spun is 753,974 yards. The counts range from 96 to 6. I have not yet examined the yarn. But if all of it is weavable, it is a quantity to be proud of. And if all these members have an independent living faith in hand-spinning, I should not despair of success within a reasonable distance of time.

Young India, 7-5-1925

APPENDIX

EXTRACT FROM DEWAN OF TRAVANCORE'S SPEECH ON VYKOM SATYAGRAHA

The third matter relates to the resolution that was moved by Mr. N. Kumaran recommending that the Government should throw open the roads around and in the vicinity of the Vykom temple to all classes. I propose to deal with this resolution at some length and explain the position of the Government. The custom prohibiting the use by certain communities of certain roads forms the basis of the Vykom satyagraha and has been the cause of considerable comment both in and outside Travancore. There are certain Hindu communities falling outside the fold of caste in Kerala, whose approach or touch has been, from time immemorial, unfortunately considered to carry pollution with it, both to the members of caste Hindu communities and to the deities in the temples to which the latter communities have access. In consequence, these non-caste Hindu communities have not been allowed the use of roads lying within a certain distance from some Hindu temples even though such roads are public in the sense that they are open to certain classes of the public. The existence of this custom is admitted by the non-caste Hindus. The most important among the non-caste Hindu communities, so far as Travancore is concerned, are the *Ezhavas*, who constitute one-sixth of the entire population, and who have, within recent times, made rapid advance in education and in material prosperity. This community naturally feels that the prohibition is derogatory to its self-respect and it is a feeling with which every right-minded man is bound to sympathize. The case of the *Ezhavas* and their brethren has, as a matter of fact, secured a certain amount of sympathy from members of communities more fortunately circumstanced.

The satyagraha movement at Vykom was started nearly a year ago by a band of *Ezhavas* and their sympathizers to get this disability removed. The *modus operandi* of the movement consisted in the attempt to break through the long-established custom referred to above by entering the prohibited area, even though it meant wounding the religious susceptibilities of the caste Hindus, and by defying the orders of the local Magistracy forbidding entry into the prohibited area, such orders having had to be passed to preserve the public peace threatened by the action of the non-caste Hindu communities. The aim of the satyagrahis is to force the hands of the Government to authorize by an executive order the violation of an established custom, which has received the recognition of the Travancore High Court in a series of decisions commencing with the case in 5 T.L.R. and which is therefore the present law of the land.

It is not the intention of the Government to justify the existence of this custom. Some may call it prejudice and some superstition. But, by whatever

name it may be called, the custom is there and has to be reckoned with. As I have already said, it is based upon religious belief; and, as you all know, such beliefs are dear to the people who hold them. Such customs based upon religious beliefs are not unknown in other parts of India. In the Madras Presidency, for example, non-caste Hindus are not permitted to use some of the public streets inhabited by caste Hindus, and an attempt to violate this custom in the Salem District led, within the last few months, to a riot attended with murder and in the Malabar District, to a disturbance of the public peace. Even among the non-caste communities, wells touched by some of them are not used by some others. In Upper India also similar customs are widely prevalent. It is the paramount duty of every Government not to interfere with the religious beliefs or usages based upon them, so long as they are not outrageously inhuman. It is also the duty of the Government to preserve the public peace, and maintain the *status quo ante*. Every Executive Government is bound to maintain and carry out the law as it exists and as it is interpreted by its courts of justice. This is what the Travancore Government have done, as pointed out by the Additional Head Sirkar Vakil at the discussion of the resolution in the Legislative Council and this is also the policy pursued by other Governments in India.

Now let us examine the position at Vykom in some detail. The roads immediately surrounding the temple are the private property of the temple and are not public roads. Those that converge towards the temple are, on the contrary, public roads. But, according to admitted and immemorial custom, they are up to within a certain distance of the temple public in a qualified sense only, viz., that they are open to certain classes of the public alone and are not king's highways open to all communities. There is no public institution necessitating the entry into them of the entire public. The only real material inconvenience occasioned by the prohibition of entry into this area is the necessity to take devious and more lengthy routes from one point of the town of Vykom to another. This inconvenience the Government promised to remove by opening new roads for the use of the entire public on the outskirts of the prohibited area. This offer was not accepted, so that the sole justification for the demand for the removal of the prohibition is a feeling of self-respect or, in other words, sentiment. I grant that this feeling deserves to be respected; but I ask, is it possible for a Government to respect it if, in so doing, it is compelled to act in violation of a well-recognized and well-established legal position and, in defiance of the religious beliefs entertained by another community?

It has been urged, in the course of the discussion on the resolution, that the Government having thrown open public institutions, public offices and the public service to these communities, they cannot now refuse to remove this disability which is derogatory to their self-respect. It is true that the Government have done their utmost to remove several disabilities under which these communities have laboured so long and to give them equal opportunities with

the other communities as far as possible; but the grant of permission to enter areas considered sacred by certain other sections of the Hindu community is of quite a different character, as it would violate established rights based on religious faith.

It is a matter for deep regret that the *Ezhavas* and other non-caste Hindus of Travancore should have greatly prejudiced their cause by the methods they have adopted. The policy of attempting to secure the recognition of their claims by the caste Hindus through pressure put upon them by the Executive Government will be neither lasting nor far-reaching in its results. All settlements arrived at as the result of the exercise of *force majeure* are bound to be short-lived. It should have been far better had the *Ezhavas* devoted their energies to methods of peaceful persuasion and the education of the caste communities to a realization of the fact that the custom of untouchability is as degrading to the latter as it is unjust to the former. There is a world of difference between satyagraha meant to be an educative force and satyagraha intended as an instrument for the coercion of the Government and through them of the orthodox Hindus. What the sayagrahis should aim at is the conversion of the orthodox to whom untouchability is part of their faith. The results of such a course of action will, no doubt, be slow but being based on voluntary assent, will be permanent.

A satisfactory solution of the question can be reached only through negotiations between the disputing communities and by a compromise acceptable to both. While the Government recognize the legal right of the caste Hindu communities to maintain the prohibition so long as the law is what it is, they cannot but feel that it would be wise for these communities not to insist too strongly on their legal rights but to recognize the time-spirit and give up, as quickly as possible, religious beliefs and prejudices which militate against communal harmony, and to admit claims which the world has come to regard as irrefutable. The Government are prepared to do everything in their power to explore the avenues along which negotiations to this end may proceed and the needed *rapprochement* reached. More than this it is unreasonable to expect the Government to undertake and further persistence of both sides in this struggle, without change in their angle of vision, would only serve to further intensify class hatred and endanger the public peace.

Young India, 19-3-1925

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CHRONOLOGY

(*January 16—April 30, 1925*)

January 16 : At Sojitra, Gandhiji addressed conference of women and *Antyajas*. Proceeded to Bardoli.

January 17 : Addressed mass meeting at Bardoli.

January 18 : Spoke at *Kaliparaj* Conference at Vedchhi.

January 19 : Left Surat for Ahmedabad.

January 20 : Reached Ahmedabad.

January 23 : At Delhi, presided over the meeting of the All-Party Conference Committee to consider the appointment of a sub-committee to draw up a plan for swaraj and Hindu-Muslim unity.

January 24 : A sub-committee with Gandhiji as President and Motilal Nehru as General Secretary was appointed by the All-Party Conference Committee.

January 26 : The Viceroy disallowed Motilal Nehru's bill to repeal the Bengal Ordinance.

January 27 : Commenting on the Viceroy's speech, Gandhiji told pressmen at Delhi that Indian opinion was unanimous in condemning the Bengal Ordinance.

February 3 : Left Delhi for Rawalpindi.

February 4 : Reached Rawalpindi with Shaukat Ali to enquire into the Kohat disturbances.

February 5 : At Rawalpindi, addressed the Hindu refugees of Kohat.

In the Legislative Assembly, a resolution for the supersession of the Bengal Ordinanace by an Act was passed.

February 6 : At Rawalpindi, Gandhiji examined Ahmed Gul, Khilafat Secretary, and Kamal Jailane, a zamindar, regarding the Kohat riots and recorded their evidence.

February 7: Left Rawalpindi.

February 8 : Reached Delhi. Met leaders.

February 9 : Reached Ahmedabad.

Sent a wire to the Viceroy, asking for permission to visit Kohat in the beginning of March.

February 10 : At Sabarmati Ashram, spoke to the inmates on conversions of Hindus in Kohat.

February 11 : Visited Anklav, Borsad and Bhadran; addressed meetings.

February 12 : Received a welcome address from the Bhadran Seva Mandal.
Spoke at Virsad.

February 13 : Addressed a meeting at Palej.
Reached Ahmedabad.
The Viceroy sent a telegram disallowing Gandhiji's proposed tour of Kohat.

February 15 : The Kathiawar tour commenced. A special durbar was held at Rakjot to honour Gandhiji. Thakore Saheb Lakhjiraj presented a welcome address on behalf of the Representative Assembly. Gandhiji in reply stressed the programme of khadi and elimination of untouchability. Inaugurated a national school and a Jain hostel at Rajkot.

February 19 : Reached Porbunder from Rajkot.
Sent a telegram to the Viceroy repeating his request for permission to visit Kohat in order to assist the Government.
Replied to an address of Porbunder citizens. Spoke at a meeting of *Antyajas*.

February 20 : Reached Wankaner.

February 21 : Reached Wadhwan.
Visited an *Antyaja* enclave. Spoke at public meeting. Inaugurated a Bal Mandir.

February 22 : Reached Ahmedabad.
Stressed the need for prohibition in the Kathiawar States in an interview to A.P.I.
The Viceroy in a telegram reiterated his decision not to allow Gandhiji to visit Kohat.
Acharya Gidwani was released on the suspension of his sentence.

February 23 : Gandhiji sent a congratulatory telegram to Acharya Gidwani.
Wrote to Shaukat Ali regarding their differences on Kohat affairs and suggested that the whole matter be examined by Hakim Ajmal Khan or Dr. Ansari.

February 25 : Blessed Dahyabhai Patel and the bride at their marriage at the Ashram.

February 26 : In *Young India* article, criticized the Kohat settlement but ruled out civil resistance.

February 27 : Reached Delhi.

March 1 : Presided over the meeting of the All-Party Conference Committee's sub-committee on Hindu-Muslim unity at Raisina Hostel, Delhi. The sub-committee adjourned *sine die.*

March 2 : Gandhiji and Motilal Nehru issued a joint statement explaining the reasons for the sub-committee's adjournment.
Gandhiji replied to the questions of Sten Konow, a Norwegian Indologist.

March 4 : Lord Reading's visit to England for consultations with the Secretary of State for India announced.

March 5 : Gandhiji reached Bombay on way to Vykom.
In interview to Press, said Hindu-Muslim unity was inevitable.

March 7 : Reached Madras.
Gave interviews to *Swadesamitran*, *Free Press of India*, and *Swarajya* representatives.
The Madras Corporation presented a welcome address.
Spoke at a mass meeting at Tilak Ghat explaining his Vykom mission. Left for Vykom.

March 8 : Reached Ernakulam.
Received a welcome address from the Ernakulam Municipal Corporation.
Reached Cochin.
Addressed a mass meeting on Cochin beach.

March 10 : At Vykom, attended morning prayers with the satyagrahis. Held discussions with the Commissioner of Police Trivandrum, V.V.S. Aiyer of the Tamil Gurukul and the caste Hindu oppositionists.
Addressed a public meeting on the Vykom satyagraha; received an address from the *Ezhavas* of Ambalapuzha.

March 11 : Spoke to the inmates of Satyagraha Ashram on the duty of satyagrahis.
Left Vykom.
Reached Allepey.

March 12 : Reached Quilon.
Spoke on the Vykom satyagraha in reply to a welcome address presented by the Quilon Municipality.
Wrote in *Young India* answering Romain Rolland on swadeshi; explained his views on birth-control.

March 13 : At Varkalai, received a welcome address from the *Ezhavas* and other untouchables at Sivagiri Hall.
Reached Trivandrum.
Replied to a students' address at the Science College. Met members of the royal family and the Dewan of Travancore.

Several public bodies presented welcome addresses at a mammoth meeting at the Cantonment Maidan.

March 14 : The Municipal Council of Trivandrum presented a welcome address at the Victoria Jubilee Town Hall. Gandhiji complimented the Travancore Council on passing resolution on spinning.

Addressed students of the Law College, Trivandrum.

Visited Cape Comorin and Nagercoil.

March 15 : Left Trivandrum for Vykom.

Reached Kottayam. The Kottayam Municipality and the Hindi students presented welcome addresses.

March 16 : Gandhiji reached Vykom.

March 17 : Indanthurithi Nambudiri, a spokesman of the caste Hindus, gave Gandhiji a copy of *Shankara Smriti*.

Gandhiji discussed the future of satyagraha with members of the Kerala Provincial Congress Committee.

Addressed the *Pulayas* at Satyagraha Ashram.

Left Vykom.

March 18 : Reached Parur.

The citizens of Parur and others presented wlecome addresses.

At Alwaye, Gandhiji spoke at the Union Christian College and the Advaita Ashram.

Reached Trichur at 2 p.m.

Addresses were presented by the Trichur Municipality and the Nambudiri Yogakshema Sabha.

Gandhiji visited the ex-Maharaja of Cochin.

Wrote to the Police Commissioner, Trivandrum, in connection with removal of barriers and the lifting of prohibition order.

March 19 : Reached Podanur.

The railway workers presented an address.

At Tirupur, Gandhiji received a welcome address from the townsmen and the Municipal Council.

March 21 : Reached Pudupalayam.

Spoke at a villagers' meeting and replied to the welcome address of the Coimbatore District Sengunthar Mahajana Sangham.

At Tiruchengode, received an address from the Congress Committee and the Tiruchengode Union.

March 22 : Reached Madras.

Was honoured by the Madras Social Service League.

Witnessed a spinning demonstration and spoke at a women's meeting at Triplicane.

Unveiled Kasturiranga Iyengar's portrait at the *Hindu* office.

March 23 : The Commissioner of Police, Trivandrum, sent a telegram to Gandhiji, agreeing to the withdrawal of prohibitory order from April 7.

March 24 : Gandhiji conveyed to the Police Commissioner his acceptance of the latter's proposals. Released the correspondence to the Press.

At Madras, the Triplicane Urban Co-operative Society, the Madras Ayurvedic Pharmacy and the Hindi Prachar Samiti presented welcome addresses.

Gandhiji spoke to temperance workers at Gokhale Hall and addressed students of the Women's Christian College.

Several public bodies presented addresses at a public meeting at Tilak Ghat. Yakub Hasan presided.

Gandhiji received a welcome address from the directors and *Swarajya.*

March 26 : Reached Bombay.

Explained the success of his Vykom mission in an interview to *The Bombay Chronicle.*

Addressed a women's meeting; received an address presented by the depressed classes.

Witnessed a spinning competition organized by the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee.

Opened the Congress House at Girgam.

Left for Ahmedabad.

Young India published the findings of Gandhiji and Shaukat Ali on Kohat riots.

March 29 : In a manifesto, C. R. Das explained the Swaraj Party's stand on repression, violence and co-operation with the Government.

In *Navajivan* article, Gandhiji appealed to people to fast, spin and propagate khadi during the National Week.

April 1 : Left Ahmedabad for Botad on a tour of Kathiawar.

April 2 : Visited Madhada, Dhasa and Bagasara; spoke at meetings.

April 3 : At Palitana, visited the Jain shrines and replied to an address of welcome.

Discussions with Munishri Karpurvijay on spinning by sadhus.

April 5 : Spoke at Lathi.

April 6 : Spoke at a public meeting at Mangrol and replied to objections of orthodox Hindus to sitting with the *Antyajas.*

April 6-13 : National Week celebrations.

April 9 : In *Young India*, Gandhiji answered a revolutionary's arguments in favour of violence.

April 10 : The Earl of Lytton took charge as acting Viceroy for four months.

April 11 : Gandhiji reached Bombay after the Kathiawar tour. Interview to *The Bombay Chronicle* on dissensions in the Congress.

April 13 : Spoke at a public meeting organized by the Bombay Provincial Congress Committee to observe the Jallianwala Bagh Day.

April 15 : Spoke at meetings in Karadi, Gamdevi and Amalsad.

April 16 : Visited the Gurukul at Supa and addressed the *brahmacharis*.

Reached Navsari. Spoke at a meeting of Parsis.

In *Young India* article said he would follow the wishes of the majority in the Congress.

April 18 : The Jambusar Municipality presented him an address of welcome.

At Broach, Gandhiji received a welcome by the District Local Board, and addressed a public meeting at the Victoria Memorial Clock Tower.

April 23 : Reached Tithal for convalescence after an attack of malaria.

April 27 : Left Tithal for Bombay.

Reached Bombay on way to Calcutta for the Bengal Provincial Conference at Faridpur.

April 28 : At Madhav Bagh spoke at the All-India Cow-Protection Conference where the constitution of the All-India Cow-Protection Association was adopted.

April 29 : Gave interview to the special correspondent of *New India* on the Commonwealth of India Bill.

Left Bombay.

April 30 : Reached Nagpur *en route* to Calcutta.

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ERRATA

Page 225,	*line 17:*	*For* adaption	*read* adaptation
Page 448,	*last line:*	*For* ever	*read* never